

PARALEGALS CONNECT

\$\$\$ QUARTERLY MAGAZINE \$\$\$

First Quarter

March 2023

Issue No. 19

Meet our New Affiliate Partner:



JUSTICE SOLUTIONS GROUP

Justice Solutions Group is a tech-enabled investigations and intelligence firm that is here to support paralegals and the clients they help every day. From deep-dive asset searches for litigation, judgment recovery and decedents, as well as expert surveillance, due diligence and background checks for law offices, companies, investors, and much more. JSG handles it all.

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Get the 2023
Justice Solutions Group
Price Guide Here!



Whatever It Takes . . .

Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group talks about 20 years as a real "P.I.", and the real reason he built JSG.

"It's all about results...and helping good people that help others..."

Interview with "America's Private Eye" – Pages 16 - 17

**"Our Groups are accelerating Paralegals, Future Paralegals, and Future Attorneys Worldwide."
Currently, our groups have approximately 38,000+ combined members worldwide.**

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

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<https://jsgfirm.com/>

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PARALEGAL.EDU
CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES



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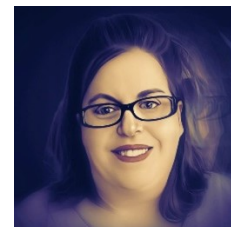
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Recession-Proof Your Paralegal Career

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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 Paralegals Connect a professional and helpful platform. Crystal is constantly creating new 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

Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com

www.linkedin.com/in/crystalcornett

Ccornett@nnlegalsearch.com

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

Crystal is a Paralegal with over 19-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 over 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:](#)

Testimonials from Recently Placed Candidates

"After three years in the Real Estate field, I decided on a different career path. When I completed my paralegal certificate, I was on the hunt for the law firm that would best suit me. Crystal Cornett and Newhouse + Noblin reached out to me because she was referred by my school's placement director. After meeting Crystal and getting to know her, I had a positive feeling about my potential position at the law firm. Crystal is professional, supportive, skilled, and answered all my questions regarding my new position. She made me feel confident and ensured I was prepared for my interview with the law firm I wanted to pursue. After accepting the paralegal position at my firm, Crystal still stays in contact with me to make certain all is well with my career at my firm. I recommend Crystal Cornett and Newhouse + Noblin to anyone looking for new career opportunities."

- Avarey A., Litigation Paralegal (January 2023)

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*“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 **38,000+** *combined members worldwide.*



Website: www.ParalegalsConnect.com

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

Paralegals Connect (Main Group) (19,061 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect

Our first and largest group support 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 (9,876 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 (4,606 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 (1,020 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 (1,373 Followers)

www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect

#ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: Twitter (266 Members)

<https://Twitter.com/ParalegalsCnnct>

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Paralegals Connect: Facebook Page (1,115 Followers)

www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: LinkedIn

Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9052061/> (795 Members)

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

Founder: 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 the Paralegals Connect Magazine to our members, paralegal schools, and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate Partner with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **38k+ 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 Cornett* Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com 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.

Those seeking a more comprehensive preparation for their paralegal career, or those seeking their first college degree, can continue to the Associate of Applied Science Degree Paralegal Program which includes additional paralegal electives such as E-Discovery, Oil and Gas, Intellectual Property, and Immigration Law. Academic general education courses round out this paralegal degree program.



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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.

www.etsy.com/shop/EverSoCreative



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Paralegal Job Board



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The Paralegal Writer™

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of **The Paralegal Writer™**, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at The George Washington University and a Professor of Legal Research and Writing at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and also the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

Jackie's passion is to help legal professionals at all levels, including paralegal students, with professional document and letter design, persuasive memoranda writing, precise legal citations, and improved grammar and punctuation. The Paralegal Writer offers a quarterly signature course, "Pen A Memo™," to support applicants taking the Skills Exam and those looking to master the art of IRAC. The Paralegal Writer also recently launched a Citation Workshop Series, which provides an hour of practice monthly. Mastering Legal Writing in 8 Weeks will launch in early March! Payment options are always available.



Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
Thank you!

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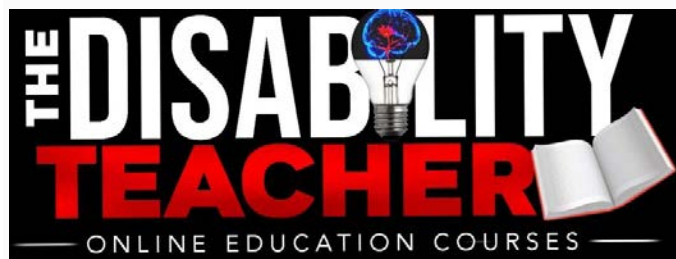
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Justice Solutions Group

Justice Solutions Group is a tech-enabled investigations and intelligence firm that is here to support paralegals and the clients they help every day. From deep-dive asset searches for litigation, judgment recovery and decedents, as well as expert surveillance, due diligence and background checks for law offices, companies, investors, and much more. they can handle It all.

Whatever It Takes Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group talks about 20 years as a real "P.I.", and the real reason he built JSG.

"IT'S ALL ABOUT RESULTS...AND HELPING GOOD PEOPLE THAT HELP OTHERS..."



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Links to all groups can be found here: <https://linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect>

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Paralegals Connect (Main Facebook Group) | 19,061 Members |
| Paralegals Connect: Employment Board Facebook Group | 9,876 Members |
| Virtual / Freelance Paralegals Connect Facebook Group | 4,606 Members |
| Paralegals Connect: Study Group Facebook Group | 1,020 Members |
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Quarterly Magazine Distributed to our 38k+ Members

Interview with "America's Private Eye" - Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group



JUSTICE
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GROUP

Paralegals Connect ("PC"): What is Justice Solutions Group and how did you become a Private Investigator?

We're a full-service private investigations firm that specializes in asset searches, due diligence, litigation research and surveillance for law firms, capital, insurance, and third-party administrators. All the investigators here came from a variety of backgrounds, mostly law enforcement and military. I am a former police officer with the Department of Defense, and I worked with the US Navy and Marine Corps for several years before transitioning to the private sector, where I have worked in executive security and investigations for the past seventeen years.

My brother Tyler helped me start the company when he got out of the Navy and is our Director of Intelligence. We started JSG because we saw a huge need for competent and clear information and intelligence that wasn't being provided to law firms at scale on a consistent and high-quality basis. Every day, we rely on our decades of experience to understand what our clients need, anticipate changes in the industry, and are constantly upgrading our capabilities to provide the best solutions and services possible.

PC: What services do your clients use the most in and what do you provide?

We provide a lot of different services, but we are known mainly for three primary things: Asset Searches with highly accurate and legal bank and brokerage account research, background checks, due diligence for litigation and capital finance, as well as Tier-1 surveillance agents to support our insurance and litigation clients.

To date, we've done thousands of asset searches and background reports and conducted over a hundred thousand hours of surveillance. We have offices in every time zone in the US, so we're able to service clients nationally and globally, with whatever they need. Our private network of licensed, top-tier field investigators have been hand-selected and vetted to meet our extremely high standards, that way we can support our clients both with intelligence and field investigations, no matter what type of case.



PC: There are a lot of investigation companies out there – What sets JSG apart from your competition?

We're here to help get our clients positive results, and to help them with whatever they need to assist their clients get positive results, so they have the best chance at a positive outcome in their case, and within the bounds of the law, we do whatever we can, and whatever it takes to get the best results. Our commitment to giving that best effort is what we think has really set us apart and contributed to the incredible growth we have seen over the last few years. We saw the handwriting on the wall early so-to-speak with police departments being stretched thin and not being able to help in a lot of scenarios, and we know that in litigation, family law, probate, and other fields of law, often the clients that law firms are working with are in one of the most difficult times in their life.

Every day we speak with clients going through some very stressful situations, and we know that even if we can't help them at that exact point in time, we believe that we have a duty to listen and help them know that it will all be ok, it will work out, and life will move forward. We are in the business of helping others and helping people that are also helping others (paralegals!) by doing the work that matters in this world to create a level playing field and hopefully bend the arc towards justice.

We also know that it's important that as we grow, we set the tone for the industry, and one of service and giving back is really important. We started a scholarship program three years ago called the "Future Mentor's Scholarship", where we award \$2,500 to a student who embodies our company philosophy of mentoring and helping others. My partner Tyler is my "Little Bro" from the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization, and he and I have been brothers for over twenty years. Last year we had over fifteen hundred applicants and reading the essays we were impressed by so many great stories of helping and mentoring. In a world that can seem very ominous some days, we know there are a lot of young people right now that are doing the good work, and the future is very bright.

PC: What's the hardest part about your job?

Knowing we can't always help everyone. There is a great quote by Fred Rogers from TV's 'Mr. Rogers Neighborhood' where he said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

Everyone here at JSG is a helper first, and "We're here to help" is our internal company mantra. We're growing as fast as we can to help as many people as we can, but there are some situations where we just simply don't have access yet to intelligence or where we physically can't intervene, and that's hard for us. Every day our police, fire, EMS, and military are at the end of the day, good people trying to do good and help. This happens day in and day out and we often never realize how valuable and critical it is until we need it.

We know that paralegals, attorneys and what we do to support is vital and critical too, and we're all in it together. We're grateful to be a part of the legal world and leveraging all our experience to help others.

PC: What's the craziest story / case you can tell us about as a PI?

Oh boy. There's so many. I've worked thousands of cases and have seen and done probably everything...twice!

We had a recent case where the police could not help a client who had a young delivery driver that had decided to just steal \$50k in custom-designed clothing, and just vanish. The client filed a police report immediately, but the police had no ability to help. Unfortunately, only serious violent crime takes all the bandwidth of detectives, these days.

We know that with stolen goods, the clock is ticking. With just a license plate and a first name we were able to identify the driver, have surveillance of his apartment within hours, and determine he was still in possession of the clothes. We knew that a felony arrest was possible, but we contacted him (and his mom...who obviously wasn't happy) and were able to get everything back without incident. The driver of course claimed innocence and that he didn't know he had the items, so he knew the odds were on his side the police would do nothing even if they eventually got around to it. We could have pressed charges if needed but the client just wanted to get the clothes back. The driver got lucky, and he knew it, so hopefully he thinks twice in the future.

PC: What's the best way to contact you? Do you do free consultations?

JSG: Yes! All our initial consultations on cases are free, and we love to talk to our law office clients about what they do and see if there's anywhere, we can help. We do a lot of different things for a lot of different types of law, so just visit us on our website at jsgfirm.com and send us a message or call us at 800.278.9329 and our receptionist team will set up a consultation for you. You can also get our law office price guide at <https://bit.ly/paralegalsconnect> or by scanning the QR code. We look forward to talking with all the great paralegals here in the Paralegals Connect community!



All You Need to Know on How to Become a Remote Online Notary (“RON”) By: Crystal Cornett



I have been a Traditional Commissioned Notary Public in the State of Texas since 2004. I have heard about the ability to notarize documents online since the start of the Pandemic. However, I never spent the time to research how to become an online notary (sometimes call a “remote online notary” or “RON”), until now. I’ve seen so many posts in [Paralegals Connect](#) asking which RON Platform is recommended and have always been curious about this process and the platform.

For those of you wanting to incorporate online notarization into your workflow and/or choosing a RON Platform, I’m hoping that this article helps you learn, through my experience, how to become an online notary, answers your important questions, and assists you in making your platform decision. Fortunately, my RON Platform provider had a “turnkey” service walking me through each step including, platform training, discussion of the rules and requirements, and assisted in creating the digital certificate and electronic seal.

**The steps and requirements discussed in this article pertain to notaries and online notaries in Texas. The requirements in other states will vary, so consult the Secretary of State, or regulating agency in your state, which will usually provide the requirements for becoming a RON.*

Steps to Become a Remote Online Notary

Step 1:

You must first be an active commissioned Traditional Notary Public.

With your active traditional commission, you may apply to be commissioned as an Online Notary Public, but you will need a few things discussed below in Step 2.

Step 2:

First, you will need a x.509 [Digital Certificate](#). The digital certificate, also known as a digital signature, will be registered to you as a RON and will be filed with the Secretary of State, and is valid for two (2) years. The x.509 Digital Certificate will be your electronic signature in every online notarization you perform and must be dedicated *solely* for your online notarizations and no other purpose and must be x.509 compliant.

What does a x.509 Digital Certificate do? I’ll try to explain this in nontechnical language as it was explained to me. When you place your x.509 Digital “tamper evident” Certificate on an electronic notarized document, it will take a “snapshot” of that document on a given date and time, it will contain your information as the RON, and it will reflect if the document is the exact same document, or if the document has changed or been tampered with since the certificate was applied.

Second, you will need your online Electronic Notary Seal (Notary Stamp). This is an image file that looks exactly like your “ink stamp” notary seal. This electronic seal will need to be renewed when your traditional notary commission is renewed.

Step 3:

You will apply online for your Online Notary Commission on the Secretary of State website, upload your x.509 Digital Certificate, and Electronic Notary Seal, and pay an application fee via credit card to the Secretary of State. Once you are commissioned and sworn in you will need a RON Platform to perform online notarizations.

What is a RON Platform?

A Remote Online Notary Platform (“RON Platform”) is a secure online software platform wherein you will meet with your clients or other signing party remotely, identify them, administer an oath, if need be, complete affidavits, verifications, acknowledgments, or other notarial acts, and notarize their electronic documents. This is all done through a secure video conference, which will be recorded by and stored on the RON Platform service provider.

Recommended RON Platform: Notary.io

So, who do I recommend using for your RON Platform? I would absolutely recommend [Notary.io](#)!

While researching RON Platforms, I came across Notary.io. I asked them to be an Affiliate Partner with Paralegals Connect since I was impressed with their platform, quality of training, and services. Notary.io went above and beyond and gave me pointers on how to efficiently and effectively complete electronic online notarized documents.

Reasons to use Notary.io

Reason 1: Assistance throughout the Traditional and/or Online Notary Commission Process.

During your online training session, Notary.io will walk you and/or your notary staff through the online application process with the Texas Secretary of State. Notary.io provides professional training on Texas online notary rules and requirements to get you quickly up and running as an online notary.

Reason 2: Notary.io creates your x.509 Digital Certificate and Online Electronic Notary Seal.

Before my training, Notary.io requested that I email the following:

- Name(s) and email(s) of individuals participating in training.
- Notary ID Number of individuals participating in training. (Found on your notary stamp.)
- Sign a blank piece of paper with a thick marker, (like a sharpie) so they can digitize your signature.

Notary.io then creates the x.509 Digital Certificate and Electronic Notary Seal for you and your team!

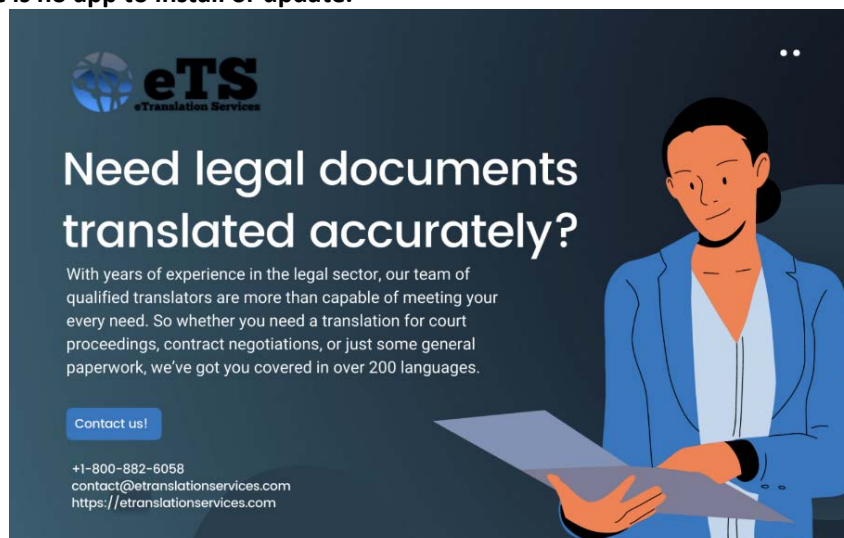
Reason 3: Notary.io provides Professional Training on how to use the Notary.io Platform.

Reason 4: **No Recurring Fees.** There are no reoccurring annual or monthly software/platform fees, no minimum use charge, and fees for online notarizations are solely based on use (\$16 per online notarization).

Reason 5: **You access the Notary.io platform through your web browser so there is no app to install or update.**

Online Notarization in a Nutshell

1. Login to the [Notary.io platform](#), enter name and information about the signing party, select a method of identifying the signing party, and generate a link to the upcoming session. You may also add a client/matter number to track the session for billing your law firm's client.
2. Email the signing party the session link, document(s) to be notarized, and date/time to meet online.
3. Online Notary joins the session. Signing party follows the link and Notary.io walks them through the identification process, obtains an electronic signature, and then the signing party meets the online Notary in the secure video room.
4. A recorded session is initiated, and the online Notary makes a statement of the method of identity (personal knowledge, photo ID credentialing plus knowledge-based authentication test, or other approved method).
5. Online Notary performs the necessary notarial acts that are also recorded.
6. The signing party electronically signs the document(s) and the recording and session ends.
7. Online Notary then completes the certificate following the rules and reflecting that the notarization was an online notarization and then applies the Electronic Seal and x.509 Digital Certificate signature to the document.
8. The Online Notary will have the "original" electronic file of the notarized document (typically in PDF format), and in Texas, you will need to create an image copy of the original for e-filing.



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Bottom Line: So how much does the entire process cost?

The good news is the cost was minimal to get started as a RON, and going forward I will only incur and expense when I use Notary.io's platform.

1. Traditional Notary Public Commission.

Notary.io offers a \$125 complete package for applying to become a new, or renewed, Traditional Texas Notary Commission, which includes your Texas SOS application fee, notary stamp, notary journal, and a \$10,000 bond.

*The Notary.io Store also provides notary items such as notary stamps, embossers, seal ink, and notary journals.

2. Online Notary Public Commission.

The application is \$51.35, paid directly to the Secretary of State.

3. x.509 Digital Certificate and Electronic Notary Seal.

\$25 fee per notary, paid to Notary.io, which will be billed to account holder on the first month's invoice.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Crystal Cornett* is a Paralegal with over 19-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).

In February 2022, Crystal resigned from her position as a Real Estate paralegal after working in a law office for over 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. Connect with Crystal on [LinkedIn](#).

Crystal is the Founder of Paralegals Connect and creates The Paralegals Connect Magazine, which is distributed quarterly to our 38k worldwide members. This June we will celebrate the 10-Year Anniversary since the start of Paralegals Connect and the 5-Year Anniversary of The Paralegals Connect Magazine!

4. Setup and Online Training: For business account holders (law firms, corporations with notaries as employees, contract paralegal businesses, etc.) Notary.io offers a "**Business Plan**", which provides complimentary services (*free unless a charge is indicated*) including:

- Provides professional training on how to use the Notary.io platform.
- Provides professional training on Texas online notary rules and requirements.
- Provides the x.509 Certificate. (*\$25 for each 2-year x.509 certificate*)
- Provides the electronic seal.
- Provides assistance in the online application process with the Texas Secretary of State.

Notary.io offers the "**Mobile Notary Plan**" a \$125 startup package. This package is for startup remote notaries and sole proprietorships who cannot provide proof of frequent notarizations. This package includes a \$20 Notary University Training session, and five (5) prepaid Online Notarization Sessions.

5. The only cost after your initial set up is \$16 for each notarization performed on the platform and Notary.io will provide a monthly invoice setting out each online transaction.

The \$16 charge for each online notarization includes the creation and Texas required five (5) year storage of online notary's electronic record (including the required video recording). Note that some states will have records retention periods longer than 5 years.

Also check with Notary.io for details and applicability of the \$48 session cap/discount when multiple online notarizations are completed within the same online session.



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- + **On Campus** - If a classroom setting is your preference, we've got you covered. Classroom instruction provides traditional in-person lecture and increased opportunity for teamwork and collaboration. Weekday and Saturday classes are available.

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- + **Career Services** - We offer a multitude of services to help graduates begin their careers.
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- + **Employer Connections** - Leverage our relationship with hundreds of law firms and employers.
- + **Externships Available** - Gain real world experience before you graduate.

Accreditation, Memberships & Associations

| | |
|---|---|
|  Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges |  American Association for Paralegal Education |
|  Council on Occupational Education ¹ |  National Federation of Paralegal Associations |
|  Higher Education Coordinating Board |  National Association of Legal Assistants |
|  Texas Workforce Commission |  Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas |
|  Texas Veterans Commission | |

¹ Council on Occupational Education, 7840 Roswell Road, Building 300, Suite 325, Atlanta, GA 30350, Telephone: 770-396-3898 / FAX: 770-396-3790, www.council.org

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+ 6 Electives including Externship (7 w/o Externship)
Wills, Trusts and Probate
Criminal Law and Procedure
Real Estate
Intellectual Property
Immigration Law
E-Discovery
Advanced Civil Procedure
Advanced Research and Writing
Oil and Gas Law
Externship

Other Requirements: Business Math

How to Communicate Criminal History to Potential Employer

By: Tami Riggs



If you have a criminal past, you have likely encountered difficulties re-entering the workforce or obtaining a professional position. A career change or job search with a conviction can be challenging. However, many find success! They can and do enter the legal field, despite the limitations a criminal record presents.

Any part of a candidate's background that violates accepted social standards or involves dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or violence may impact interviewing and hiring decisions. Law firms typically refrain from reviewing or selecting candidates with a misdemeanor or felony conviction for drugs, assault, theft, burglary, trespass, and any offenses involving weapons. These are considered crimes of "moral turpitude." Moral turpitude crimes disqualify a person from obtaining a Notary Commission in many states, and notary licensing laws disallow felons. Associations and organizations (including those that are not legal) may also deny testing, membership, and affiliation for applicants with a criminal background. However, there are opportunities in the legal field that do not require a designation or organizational membership. It will be important to explore possible restrictions in licensure and certification as you move forward in your professional career and educational pursuits. If you have a crime on your record, research the laws and regulations in your state so that you fully understand any job, designation, or membership restrictions.

Most entities will consider 5 aspects before making a final decision to disqualify a candidate from hire or membership:

1. Applicant's age at time of offense
2. Elapsed time since conviction
3. Nature and type of offense
4. Relevance of crime to position
5. Evidence of positive change

Don't be afraid to discuss your background, employment history, education, job training programs, community support, and other relevant rehabilitative efforts. You may be asked for more detailed information, so be prepared to explain your circumstances. Answer honestly when directly asked about any past transgressions.

This will support your credibility and character. There may be employers who will overlook a criminal record, when legally possible, to hire the right person. A long string of convictions in the look-back period could be viewed as negative factors in the context of decision-making. On the other hand, youthful offender adjudications, first offender offenses, and offenses older than 7 years are often mitigating factors, as they do not reflect an ongoing pattern of illegal behavior.

School transcripts, certificates from job training, proof of employment or volunteer/service work, and letters of recommendation can be submitted to reinforce positive change, community engagement, and commitment to personal and professional growth. How you communicate your past makes a difference, too. Demonstrate a mature perspective, insight into your behavior and attitudes, and evidence of rehabilitation. No one wants to become entangled in the criminal justice system, but nearly everyone who does generally learns a great deal from the experience.

WHEN COMMUNICATING A CONVICTION TO AN EMPLOYER INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING:

- Display a positive image and project confidence as a worthwhile candidate and asset.
- Communicate information that highlights your skills and match these to the abilities the employer needs.
- Offer a brief explanation of your crime, including only the necessary details.
- Take responsibility for your actions and acknowledge poor choices; do not make excuses or offer justifications.
- Discuss positive things you have done to overcome the legal issue and actions you continue to take to remain productive.
- Tell the employer what your experience has taught you – social skills, conflict resolution, communication, respect for authority, living responsibly, conformity to regulations, ability to take direction and turn it into action, goal setting, etc.
- Confirm any third-party support.

A good response to any question regarding a past offense:

"I'm glad you asked me. I want you to feel comfortable hiring me. The crime had nothing to do with my previous employers. In my past, I was involved with XYZ. I made poor decisions. As a result, I was convicted. While under supervision/during my incarceration, I took the opportunity to enroll in and complete rehabilitative and educational programs. I now have relevant training and experience. I want to grow professionally and learn as much as possible, and I have a plan in place to obtain my career goals."

Keep in mind that employers might uncover other things during a background check or prescreening which could potentially keep you from being considered for employment. This is not limited to a criminal past. Positions that involve sensitive consumer information, billing, and money may mean that your credit background could also come into question. Creditworthiness is typically associated with reliability and organization.



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](#).

Therefore, it is common for employers to perform a credit check, especially for positions that deal with company finances or confidential data. Late payments, missed payments, charge-offs, defaults on loans, or accounts in poor standing can potentially signal irresponsibility and mismanagement. Evidence of good driving is another indicative aspect of many pre-employment background checks. A license devoid of traffic violations, points, and accidents is often equated with a responsible and respectful potential employee.

Many elements of an application are considered during the hiring process. In addition to a criminal, credit, and driving history, hiring managers will also review previous experience, educational background, and references, along with your response. Don't get discouraged! Some employers hire formerly convicted individuals, and you can still have an impactful career. Provided you maintain a clean record going forward, there will come a time when your criminal past becomes stale enough for it to carry less weight. As you rebuild, it is possible to show that you are safe, reliable, and trustworthy. You might have to consider entry-level positions in the beginning, but this can signal to employers your ongoing commitment to establishing a better life.

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Reasons To Turn Down a Job Offer

By: Rev. Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP
 On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC



The Health Benefits Aren't What You Need

When searching for your next role in your career, it's important to remember that there is more to your career than just pay/salary. When offers start rolling in, you need to consider the entire professional package, including things like:

- Health Benefits
- Continuing Legal Education
- Room for Advancement & Growth
- Work-Life Balance
- Work Culture
- Mental Health Awareness.

This article will explore why you might want to turn down a job or role offer. We will also discuss strategies you can use before and after turning it down.

The Job Duties Aren't What You Want

When interviewing for a new role, you should always research the duties. For example, each law firm is unique in what one firm considers a paralegal duty another firm may reserve for attorneys or legal assistants. Therefore, it is essential to dive into what a typical day is like for the people in the role you are interviewing for. That way, when the position is offered, you can either decline the job or choose to negotiate to add tasks to the position.

Another common deal breaker for legal professionals is that the fringe benefits don't fit their lifestyle. For example, you need health insurance for your partner, and the position does not offer health insurance for domestic partners or non-married couples.

Your job should fit your lifestyle, not the other way around. Many people don't believe in traditional marriage, yet they still want to provide for their partners. However, before turning down the position, ask if there is any flexibility to what fringe benefits are offered. You may find that the firm will negotiate benefits because other people in the office would also benefit from a different healthcare plan. You will never know if there is another solution if you don't ask.

Continuing Legal Education Reimbursement Perks Aren't What You Need

Legal professionals need CLE credits for a variety of reasons. However, we all know how expensive CLEs can be. The expense of earning the CLE credits necessary to maintain your credentials might be a struggle. Before deciding whether the lack of CLE reimbursement is a deal breaker, look at your annual and monthly CLE fees. How much are they? Can you make up the money you would lose in your yearly salary? Or maybe you could join the faculty of a CLE provider for access as a perk.

Before you turn down a role because it does not offer CLE reimbursement, research other ways to pay for the same CLEs, you don't want to turn down what might be a fantastic opportunity solely based on the lack of CLE perks.

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No Room for Growth or Advancement

If a position offers no room for growth or advancement, it may not be the best position to accept. However, this should not be a deal breaker on its own merits. There are valid reasons for accepting a role with no room for growth and advancement.

If you are new to the industry, accepting a role with no room for growth could be a perfect opportunity to gain experience. However, consider what advancement means to your overall career path before you accept or turn down a role with no room for growth. You might be surprised how you genuinely feel about advancing your career.

No Work-Life Balance, Poor Work Culture, & Mental Health Awareness

Work-life balance and mental health awareness are gaining popularity and importance among employers. It makes sense to decline a job offer when the employer does not foster a safe and healthy work culture. No job is worth sacrificing your mental health. Faith, family, and physical health are more important than paying bills. If you don't take care of your spiritual core, family, and your overall health, there will not be any need for a job anyway. There is no reason you should need to settle for less.

Closing Thoughts

Just because a position is offered does not mean you should automatically accept it. Evaluating the entire career package in relation to your lifestyle is perfectly acceptable. Careers should fit and sustain your life, not the other way around. However, there are certainly valid reasons you should turn down job offers.

Before seeking a new role, spend some time deciding what your perfect role looks like. Picture it in your mind, imagine the sounds, smells, and general atmosphere, and visualize successfully navigating the hiring process. Tell God (or the Universe) what you are looking for. Then, work on a plan that includes positive affirmation (prayer) and practical hands-on practice to make your perfect career a reality.

We encourage legal professionals (attorneys and paralegals) to contact the [Best Virtual Paralegal](#) team with career or business questions. Zoom and phone consultations are affordable and confidential. Our team is here to help. For more information about the products and services offered by the [Best Virtual Paralegal](#) team, Call, or text (717) 747- 3588 | [email us](#)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Rev. Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP, is the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (@BVParalegal). She has worked as a legal consultant, paralegal, & certified coach for over 33 years. Holly has been an affiliate contributor & expert with Paralegals Connect since 2020, and she is the current President of the New York City Paralegal Association. She is currently accepting new clients who want to build & grow successful legal careers. Contact Holly at (717) 747.3588 text/voice | [Linkedin](#) | @bvparalegal on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Instagram | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

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Eight Things Every Paralegal and Law Firm Should Know

By: Ashley Stephenson

Burnout is an increasingly pervasive issue in the legal industry, as it is in many industries. With prolonged work hours, tight deadlines, high-stress levels, and competing priorities, it's no wonder more and more paralegals and lawyers are feeling overworked, stressed, and exhausted.

The causes of burnout are multifactorial, and include factors such as an excessive workload, lack of control over the work assigned, lack of support from managerial figures or colleagues, a lack of recognition and rewards for good work performed, or difficulty balancing professional and personal responsibility. To protect against burnout, it is essential for both paralegals and firms to build resilience and create healthier and more productive environments by understanding what burnout is (and what it isn't). Fortunately, there are a number of ways, paralegals and law firms can take to build resilience and help prevent burnout:

1. **Recognize Signs of Burnout:** Burnout is often caused by prolonged stress, which is not to be confused with using burnout as an interchangeable word with general stress. A successful defense against burnout is knowledge. As such, paralegals and staff should be educated on burnout and its symptoms. Common signs of burnout may include physical and mental fatigue, a lack of enthusiasm for work, and difficulties in concentrating. Recognizing the signs of burnout can help you and your firm take steps to address the problem.
2. **Foster a Supportive Working Environment:** Workplace culture plays an important role in the well-being of staff and creating a supportive and collaborative workplace is essential for building resilience to burnout. This includes a positive working environment that emphasizes the importance of balancing work and personal life.
3. **Embrace Change:** Change can be difficult but embracing adjustments on how to work smarter can help reduce the risk of burnout. Evaluate current processes to see if there are more efficient and effective ways of accomplishing the same kinds of tasks.
4. **Take Breaks:** It is important to take regular breaks throughout the day, including time to positively collaborate with team members and other colleagues. This will give you the opportunity to take a step back and gain a fresh perspective on your work. It also gives you an opportunity to relax and recharge.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Ashley Stephenson* is a litigation paralegal, author, and personal development specialist based in New York City. Over a decade of experience in the legal profession, Ashley's unique perspective has allowed her to help others with grace and empathy on a path to discovering their own path and destiny. Her work has been featured in the Huffington Post, Attorney at Law Magazine, the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, the D.C. Bar Blog "Duly Noted," The Paralegals Connect Magazine, Google News, and multiple FOX, NBC, ABC, and CBS affiliates. Her passion for all she does has landed her speaking events at community colleges as well as societal groups in various cities. She is a member of several professional organizations including local Bar Associations, Mindfulness in Law Society, and Military Spouse J.D. Network.

5. **Incorporate Healthy Habits:** Eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep will go a long way in helping to prevent burnout. Poor health habits often lead to fatigue and reduce productivity in the workplace.
6. **Maintain a Positive Attitude:** It is essential to maintain a positive attitude while working. This can help to reduce stress and create a more productive working environment.
7. **Set Timely Goals:** Setting realistic and achievable goals is an excellent way to stay motivated and reduce stress. Establish deadlines and review progress regularly to keep yourself and your team on track.
8. **Seek Help:** If you or someone on your team is experiencing burnout, don't hesitate to ask for help. Many firms offer counseling, stress management, and other services to help address burnout.

To recognize the signs and make adjustments to help reduce the risk of burnout in order to create a healthier working environment for law firm personnel, law firms and firm leaders can decrease the likelihood of burnout occurring, by:

- Being accessible and approachable,
- Modeling firm values and addressing violations of them consistently,
- Seeking out contributions and ideas from all team members (not just firm leaders and attorneys),
- Prioritizing small attentive courtesies, by acknowledging someone's presence in your physical space or a virtual meeting,
- Being as transparent as possible, which includes communicating effectively, providing updates on any changes to policies, goals, or processes,
- Listening to understand, which involves asking questions and displaying "humble curiosity," &
- Celebrating victories by recognizing and acknowledging one's hard work.

By taking proactive steps to build resilience and design the right environment to decrease burnout and increase well-being, paralegals and law firms can help prevent burnout and remain productive, engaged, and satisfied with their work. It's time to reframe the conversation about burnout and address this problem as a systemic issue that everyone is responsible for reducing.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls When Hiring a Process Server

By: Tea Godfrey
On behalf of Solid Serve Legal



Process Service Certification & Licensure

Process service is an essential part of the legal system. Without process servers, litigation could not properly begin as those involved in a lawsuit, such as defendants or witnesses, would not be aware of the proceedings and their involvement in them.

When I was a new litigation paralegal, I didn't realize that I had latitude to hire the vendors that helped us move our cases forward. I asked my co-workers and fellow paralegals all the time, "Who do we use for X?" And many times, they only had one vendor's name and number to give me – and it was one of those big national companies that come up first in search results on Google.

But it only took one bad process service experience for me to make a stand and decide that I would never rely on that company again. I started doing my own research and eventually learned boatloads about the field of process service. Now, I'm the owner of a company that provides the kind of customer service I longed for as a litigation paralegal.

And because I want you to be successful, too, I've put together these tips to help you hire the right process servers to assist with *your* cases. Afterall, if service of process isn't "effected" properly, the judge can dismiss a case before it even begins.

So, even if you've hired process servers in the past, let's look at some common pitfalls to avoid so that your attorneys will continue to have the utmost faith in your expertise as a paralegal.



When hiring a process server, it's important to ensure that they're certified and licensed in your state. If you must send documents to be served in another state, check that state's laws, too.

Here in Oregon, we don't have any required certifications or licenses for process servers. But just to the north of us, in Washington, process servers are required to register with the county auditor. If I am asked to serve documents for a Washington case to someone here in Oregon, I am allowed to do so, but the proof of service I provide to my client must be a notarized affidavit. Washington process servers aren't required to have their proofs of service notarized. See how tricky that can be?

If your state doesn't have any particular licensure or registration rules, one way to "check" out their experience is to see if they belong to your state's association of process servers (use Google to find yours) or the National Association of Professional Process Servers (NAPPS).

In Oregon, our state association offers ongoing education and information about the field of process serving and they vet their members through background checks and references (as does the national organization). So, finding someone who is a member, is a good first step to finding a knowledgeable professional.

If you're not sure about your state's requirements, check with your local court system for specific license laws for process servers; without proper certification and licensure, any documents served by an unlicensed individual may not be considered valid or admissible in court.

Checking References & Reviews

Before making any decisions about which process server to hire for your case, make sure to do a little vetting yourself. Ask around for referrals from colleagues (at other law firms) who have used process servers before and read online reviews about them. This will give you an idea of what kind of experience others have had with that particular company and can help you decide if they're right for you.

Workflow & Communication

It's also important to consider how well the company communicates with their clients and manages their workflow. You want a process server who is organized and efficient enough to handle all the paperwork associated with delivering legal documents—and keep you updated every step of the way!

- Call them and ask them how responsive they are when it comes to emails and phone calls.
- Do they call you back the same day?
- Do they respond to your emails?
- Do they provide you with regular updates about each attempt?

It's important that they stay on top of things so that everything runs smoothly throughout the course of serving papers on behalf of your client or firm. Here at [Solid Serve Legal](#), for example, we make it a priority to communicate clearly and diligently every step of the way. We respond to all inquiries within two hours. We answer our phone 98% of the time, on the first ring, and we send our clients email updates with every attempt at service.



Gather All the RIGHT Information BEFORE You Hire

If you want your service to go smoothly, it's also important to provide your process server with all the correct information about your subject. Many times, addresses given to a process server are old or outdated. It can be hard to help a client if they give us bad info. If you're not sure about the service address, let your server know and ask them for help verifying data if you just can't seem to confirm things on your own. If you've got photos of the subject, provide those. If you've contact information for the subject, even better! The more details you can pass along to the server, the quicker your service will be completed.

Conclusion

You understand just how crucial it is for matters that involve service of process to go smoothly and efficiently. Taking these steps—checking certification & licensure, researching references & reviews, and evaluating workflow & communication—can help ensure that you find the best fit for your case needs without running into any common pitfalls along the way! With careful consideration during this initial hiring stage, paralegals can rest assured knowing their cases are off to a great start!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Tea Godfrey* is the owner of [Solid Serve Legal](#), an Oregon-based company that serves clients throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

She has over a decade of experience in the legal field and has worked in civil litigation, personal injury, family law, real estate, estate planning, and corporate law. Her company takes the promise of providing superior service literally.

Find her online at [SolidServeLegal.com](#)

Key Features to Look for When Selecting Contract Management Software

By: Sean Heck,
CobbleStone Software



The idea of implementing contract management software arises from an organization's existing contracting process becoming outdated. As you may know, common causes of this process stagnation include (but are not limited to):

- a confusing storage process – often resulting in a decentralized approach, missing or lost contracts and documents, and a confusing mess of unclear document versions.
- a lack of contract visibility and difficulty gathering documents, data, clauses, sections, and other mission critical contract management assets.
- workflow process bottlenecks – often resulting in missed or delayed tasks and obligations, compliance issues, and a lack of accountability.
- difficulty gaining actionable insights due to lackluster or non-existent reporting and analytics methods.
- too many disorganized revisions, too much contract inconsistency, and negotiation bottlenecks - potentially resulting from emailed communications, shared drives, and other inadequate contract drafting and negotiation methods.
- failure to leverage contract intelligence – resulting in a stagnant, slow-moving, and error-prone process that does not improve as contract complexity and contract volume grow.
- email-based or manual wet signatures and approval processes – which can drag out send-to-sign time and delay contract execution.

In Search of Something Better

By seeking out a robust contract management software solution, you are taking an essential step to positively transform your contract lifecycle management operations. You are giving your organization a chance to increase productivity and efficiency, decrease risk, and increase revenue for a better contracting process. But, beware; not all contract lifecycle management solutions are created equal.

In order to sufficiently immerse your organization in the new age of contracting operations digital transformation, you must select a powerful, leading contract lifecycle management software platform. The solution should automate and streamline your contract processes from requests to renewal, help your team proactively mitigate and manage risk, allow you to gain actionable insights from contracts, and much more. During your consideration, know that there are critical tools that indicate whether or not a contract lifecycle management (CLM) software solution can offer you these benefits and more.

You may even need to make a clear business case to key decision-makers within your organization for investment in contract management software. Either way, this whitepaper will help you clearly understand which features you should look for when selecting a CLM software provider – as well as the features' clear benefits! To that end, here are some key CLM features to look for when selecting contract management software.

Key Feature: A Secure Contract Repository

The CLM software system your organization chooses absolutely needs to offer a secure contract repository. With a secure contract repository backed by contract artificial intelligence with machine learning, your organization can streamline and automate your contract lifecycle management process. Your team can transform the static documents that result from your old process into dynamic CLM building blocks for improved oversight, opportunity realization, and risk mitigation.

Contract intelligence with machine learning within your ideal contract management software platform can assist your team in reaping the most from its contract repository. Critical data within newly introduced contract documents can be intelligently mapped as neat and tidy system-defined or user-defined contract data fields. As such, contract data is organized and easy to digest and search – with relevant documents and files attached for easy access.

Key Feature: Intelligent Workflow Automation

Your team and relevant stakeholders can benefit substantially from advanced contract workflow automation. This feature is a must for contract management efficiency and accountability.

Automated, rules-based contract workflow processes can alert key business users and stakeholders to important contract status updates, tasks, assignments, deadlines, and more. Each contract record page within your advanced CLM software platform can have essentially unlimited tasks that include emailed alerts and calendars.

Automated alerts can be sent to MS Outlook, Gmail, and other email systems. Workflow tasks can be assigned to a single CLM software user, multiple users, or your desired user group. Tasks can easily be escalated in the event that they are not being performed in a timely manner – affording your team punctuality and accountability. Tasks can repeat at a scheduled interval, if needed. Contract record field updates can be automated – such as those associated with the completion or rejection of a task.

For even more convenience, task calendars can be exported to populate your users' and stakeholders' email calendars. Meanwhile, the in-system calendar can display important contract events, alerts, notifications, key dates, and other prompts as defined by your team! With these incredibly convenient and streamlined tools at your disposal, you would be remiss not to choose a contract software platform with intelligent workflow automation.

Key Feature: Reporting & Analytics Tools

With contract management reports, your team can easily digest contract analytics gleaned from critical contract data – including KPIs, workflow tasks, financials, bids, vendors, compliance, renewal dates, and more. Robust contract management software is equipped with contract data searching, executive graphical dashboards, and contract financials tracking – all features to look out for incredibly optimized CLM processes.

Your team can access pre-built ad hoc reports or create their own – with user-friendly previewing and editing functionality, “and/or” logic filtering, sorting, naming, charting, and exportation to spreadsheet file formats. You can also receive recurring emailed ad hoc reports – such as daily or monthly reports – and display up-to-date data within your highly configurable dashboard.

Graphical dashboards can help analyze statistical data quickly and effectively at a glance. With the help of such a visually engaging format, you can assess contract metadata comparisons quickly and dynamically. Additionally, integrated statistical analysis and various grouping options can prove helpful in consistently tracking your contract KPIs.

Explore More Key Contract Management Software Features

While these are only some of the key features to look for when selecting the right contract management software for your organization, you can explore more key CLM features by downloading a copy of the 7 Features To Look for When Selecting Contract Management Software whitepaper at CobbleStoneSoftware.com/7-Contract-Management-Software-Features.

Don't take our word for it. See all the contract management software features that CobbleStone® has to offer.

Ready to try out contract lifecycle management software for yourself? Visit CobbleStoneSoftware.com/Company/Free-Trial to take advantage of your free 30-day CLM software trial!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

[Sean Heck](#) is the Content Marketing Manager of CobbleStone Software.



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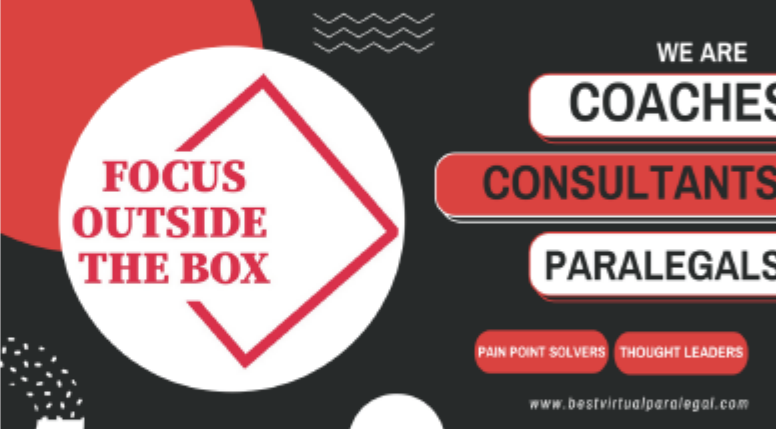
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Where Do I Begin?

By: Jackie Van Dyke, CP®

On behalf of **The Paralegal Writer™**



Overwhelmed with what to write? Unsure how to begin? Break down a larger writing task into smaller pieces. Then, master the skill of capturing your audience's attention and keeping your readers wanting more.

If you find yourself struggling with topic ideas or where to look for content, say to yourself, "I don't know how to find that, but I can figure it out!" Google is a great source. Plug in keywords or phrases and numerous options will pop up. Subscribe to legal news sources and check out what's current. Artificial intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT are hot topics early in 2023.

When drafting an essay or memorandum, begin with a compelling introduction. Capture the attention of your audience within the first paragraph. Begin with an alarming statistic. Start with a short but emotion-capturing story. Project a sense of urgency. Alternatively, write the introduction after the body of the essay.

Details and numerical data can be boring. If the document must be technical, consider a graph or pie chart as a way for your audience to easily visualize important details. Always keep your audience in mind when writing.

Give your reader cause to continue reading. Incorporate striking adjectives and action verbs into your sentences. Use a thesaurus to help brainstorm varying word choices. Mix up the length of your sentences. Even a single "Yes" can be a standalone sentence. Rambling sentences are boring and your reader can easily lose the point you are trying to make.

Avoid legal jargon and unnecessary phrases. Always check spelling and use proper punctuation. Minimize using the exclamation point. Eliminate repetition unless used for emphasis. Contractions do not belong in formal writing. Be aware of possessive pronouns and stay away from vague pronouns. These basics reflect your credibility as a writer.

Another way to become a better writer is to read the works of other authors. Read different types of content. Make note of their paragraph structure and tone.

We can all learn to be better writers. Practice writing, even if only five minutes per day. Ask for help. The feedback you receive will generate the confidence to continue writing.

**Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good.
It's the thing you do that makes you good.**

-Malcolm Gladwell



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of The Paralegal Writer™, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at George Washington University and a Legal Research and Writing Professor at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

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Recession – Proof Your Paralegal Career

By: Rev. Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP
On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

There has been much talk about a recession. Depending on whom you ask, some people believe we are knee-deep in a recession, while others think we're heading that way. Either way, things are bleak economically. In addition, many paralegals have struggled with career instability over the past three years.

In this article we will discuss ways that you can recession proof your paralegal career without a side hustle or part time gig. You don't have to work yourself to exhaustion to recession proof your career like some experts like to suggest. In fact, all these tips are career strategies paralegals and attorneys should put into practice even in times of great financial wealth and abundance.

Keep Your Career Moving Forward

Keep your skills updated. Technology is at the forefront of the paralegal skill set. Attorneys depend on paralegals and other support staff to make suggestions to enhance workflow with technology. Often, paralegals are expected to know more about software, AI tools, and different technology strategies to help lawyers be better lawyers. Take an opportunity to think about what skills are relevant to your specific ideal role. Is there a course you can take? Is there a CLE you can attend? Is there a coach that can help you learn new skills or enhance the skills you already have? Do everything you can to improve your marketability and keep your skills current for the role you truly want and desire.

The legal industry has valuable continuing legal education (CLE) opportunities available. There are many affordable possibilities, such as the CLEs and courses I offer through Best Virtual Paralegal Educational Services. Your paralegal association and community college are other great resources for CLEs and courses.



Expand Your Network. Expanding your network is essential at any time, but it is especially important during financial instability. The more you do when you don't need a job, the easier and more likely it will be that people in your professional circle will be willing to engage and enhance your search when you need a new role. So don't wait; start setting up calls to catch up with your network today.

Throughout my career, there have been several people I meet with every quarter. It is conversational and fun; we discuss everything from career goals, courses, work-life balance, and hobbies. It is low key no pressure. That's how it should be. But then, if we ever need to support each other, we're ready to do it because we've been building a relationship over time.

Become indispensable. Find ways to go above and beyond your role. This does not mean you should sacrifice your evening and weekends. This means looking for ways to improve your job performance. Become the go-to person in the office for one particular skill. Make that skill your "thing," and make sure you are the best you can be at it. Get creative about saving the firm time or money or help them gain new clients. Now is not the time to be complacent in your career.

Always keep an eye out for new positions—even if you're happy. If you suspect a layoff might be coming at your firm, you must be proactive about looking for another position. Even if you don't suspect anything, keeping an eye out for other opportunities is never a bad idea. Look at the job boards periodically. Get in touch with your network regularly to discuss potential opportunities, stay up-to-date with who's hiring, and look for internal connections. Make sure your resume and other portfolio documents are updated and ready to go, just in case.

Always carry a concise one-page resume with you.



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Paralegal & Career Strategist
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Strategy #3

Work with a career coach strategist. Working with a career strategist is the best way to learn how to interview and keep your career moving forward. Learn critical skills and leave with specific tools for career development and workplace success. Career coaches and strategists can help you develop a plan for moving your career forward, even during a recession. The right coach and strategist can help you to land job offers in careers that genuinely fit your life.

A career strategist can help you:

- Develop a plan to keep your career moving;
- Figure out what type of firm you prefer to work with;
- Find unique ways to apply for opportunities;
- Design and draft career documents that enhance your skills;
- Practice preparing for job interviews;
- Develop a career search and more.

We encourage legal professionals (attorneys and paralegals) who have career questions to contact the [Best Virtual Paralegal](#) team. Zoom and phone consultations are affordable and confidential. Our team and career strategists are here to help.

For more information about the products and services offered by the [Best Virtual Paralegal](#) team, call or text (717) 747- 3588 or [email us here](#).

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