

than when you are continually switching the types of tasks or are constantly interrupted.

Chapter 6 – Proactive Strategy Six: Systemize Your Office

Do what you can to eliminate crises that arise internally. Issues such as poor office protocol, a lack of written office procedures and piles of files increase the chance of something falling through the cracks and creating a problem.

Chapter 7 – Proactive Strategy Seven: Manage Interruptions

Industrial engineers have determined that the average length of an interruption is seven minutes, and it takes about three minutes to get back into what you were doing when you were interrupted. This adds up to 10 minutes per interruption. It is not uncommon to hear attorneys say that they view Saturday and even Sundays as a real haven—not for rest and relaxation, but to concentrate and get work done. When they analyze this statement, they realize that it is primarily because there are no interruptions to deal with. What they have gained in time spent on production, however, is a huge loss in the personal column of life, interacting with family as well as taking care of themselves.

Chapter 8 – Proactive Strategy Eight: Practice Delegation

To make the same amount of money or more, yet work fewer hours and have a personal life, you must be able to delegate. The attorney who tries to do it all and minimizes the involvement of other staff members becomes quickly burned out and reduces his or her option to have time away from the practice.

Chapter 9 – Proactive Strategy Nine: Take a Vacation

Planning and taking a vacation is the best way to test whether your office is fully systemized, your team is trained and your practice is capable of running without you.

There may never be a convenient time to take a vacation. The authors are convinced, however, that with enough advance planning, you can make it work. Time off may actually benefit your practice. When you leave your environment for a week or two and allow yourself to stop thinking about the technical aspects of your practice (which may not happen until the second week), new and more creative ideas will occur to you.

As a criticism, I wish the authors would have included a wider variety of practice areas and law firm sizes in the examples used throughout the book. By doing so, they could have increased the book's appeal to a wider group of attorneys. Although there is no such indication in the title, the book is more specifically directed toward a litigation practice and a small firm or solo practice. For those who practice in such settings, the illustrations used by the authors will hit home. In contrast, those attorneys who have a transactional practice or practice in a larger law firm will find it a bit harder to identify with the examples set forth by the authors. Despite this criticism, the book does contain universal principles applicable to all practicing attorneys.

In conclusion, this book offers a unique perspective for lawyers with respect to time management, stress management and balancing a professional/personal life. I highly recommend this book for those who are serious about such matters. So, my fellow attorney colleagues, I do hope you can find the time to read it!



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Raising the Bar: Legendary Rainmakers Share Their Business Development Secrets

by Robin M. Hensley
Schroder Media, LLC, 130 pages

reviewed by John T. Marshall

Raising the Bar is a book of fire-side chats, conducted by author Robin M. Hensley, with 10 “icons” of the State Bar of Georgia whom I, along with so many other lawyers, have known and respected for many years. The featured lawyers in the book and accompanying DVD are: Miles J. Alexander, Emmet J. Bondurant, Bobby Lee Cook, Clay C. Long, Frank Love Jr., Carl E. Sanders, Richard H. Sinkfield, Chilton D. Varner, Paul Webb Jr. and the late Judge Griffin B. Bell. The DVD inside the back cover of the book contains excerpts of her interviews with each of these lawyers.

The book is informative, as well as entertaining, because it gives us an inside look at the professional lives of these lawyers. Hensley has done an excellent job interviewing these lawyers and encouraging them to converse candidly about their careers. The book is a valuable collection of their reminiscences and professional philosophies. There are lessons here in client development and lawyer-client relationships that are timeless.

Moreover, this book will be especially valuable for young lawyers who will learn from the masters about achieving professional and business success in the practice of law. There's a certain ethic—a determination and a love of the law—that has kept these lawyers going over the decades. The profession calls out for young lawyers who feel that same kind of calling today.

Some prospective readers may say, “Some of these lawyers started practicing law a long time ago. Times have changed! The world is different now.” And that is all true.

Today, there is little doubt that a successful lawyer must understand and implement sound business practices. Our Bar grows larger each year. Law practice is now more specialized and sophisticated than ever. In fact, some might argue law practice has become more of a business than a profession.

One of the major points in this book is that the wise lawyers interviewed here understand that as the world continues to change, the practice of law must change, too. But, at the same time, the careers of these lawyers demonstrate that the practice of law is still a profession, and not merely a business. The lawyers featured in the book take a fresh look at old problems, knowing that love of the law and its ideals, taking care of clients, and building a sound business are not contradictory. There is classic advice here for every reader; and for every young lawyer, there is historic knowledge to be gained in recognizing that, although the manner of practicing law may be modified in years to come, the ethics of the profession remain tried and true.

Changes in the economy, such as the one we are experiencing now, will inevitably change the demand for legal services. That requires flexibility and a willingness to learn new skills. "You have to take some cases that you wouldn't take ordinarily, both from a standpoint of money and skill requirements," my old friend, Frank Love Jr., retired partner, and former chair of the litigation department at Powell Goldstein, advised in the book. "If you're specializing in an area and the business just dries up, which happens sometimes, you have to learn new skills." That advice is especially important today.



Some lawyers from around the state may question the relevancy of this book to their law practices. After all, eight of the 10 lawyers interviewed here are now in large Atlanta law firms. This book, however, is not about large firms in Atlanta or elsewhere. It is about the individual careers of these outstanding men and women who are in the very front rank of the Bar. Many of them started out in law firms that were much smaller than their present law firms. While this book is about attracting clients and growing a law practice, the overriding message in this book is to be found in the things these lawyers did to practice law fully and successfully, and to serve their clients as well. Whatever their particular circumstances, all of these lawyers were devoted to the law and the highest ideals of our profession.

The lawyers interviewed here have heard—and answered—the call to practice law nobly. As I read *Raising the Bar*, I was reminded all

over again that we are members of a noble profession. And, I was thrilled and challenged by that message as I read about the careers portrayed here. I think the reader will be, too.

Let me urge you: Don't miss this book! And, for added enjoyment, may I suggest that you keep a touch of Scotch (or its equivalent) at your elbow as you turn these pages? The book and the accompanying DVD are thoroughly enjoyable! 



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