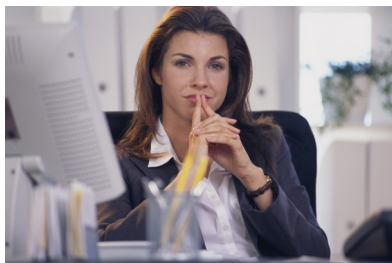


How will you utilize a paralegal in your practice?

A paralegal can change the way you work, make your practice more efficient, help balance your caseload, and give you more time to focus on pressing matters. It all leads to less stress and a better work-life balance.

As clients increasingly seek high quality legal work at competitive prices, many are demanding that their attorneys utilize a paralegal to minimize legal fees. Because the lower paralegal billing rate can save clients a substantial amount in legal fees, attorneys who utilize paralegals are increasingly sought after.

So, how will you utilize a paralegal in your practice?



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What is a Paralegal?

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**Providing legal support to
attorneys and firms as needed.**

What is a Paralegal?

According to the American Bar Association,

“A legal assistant or paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.”

What does this mean to you as an attorney?

It means you're not alone. With the proper education, training, or experience, a paralegal can complete for you pretty much any task you would generally perform as long as he or she does not directly practice law.

[While state laws vary in their definition of unauthorized practice of law (UPL), they generally agree that a paralegal cannot give legal advice, represent a client in court, conduct depositions, share in attorney's fees, or negotiate legal rights. (Consult your state law for more information on what is considered UPL in your jurisdiction.)]

The benefits of utilizing a paralegal abound. You manage your time and caseload more effectively when you delegate substantive legal tasks to a paralegal and, by doing so, you increase the amount of time you have to address more pressing matters. Utilizing a paralegal can also help you achieve a work-life balance.

However, you are not the only one who benefits from your use of a paralegal; your clients also benefit. Because the paralegal billing rate is generally less than that of the attorney's, the client's legal fees can be reduced dramatically.

So what can a paralegal do for you?

Most paralegals are not utilized to their full potential. What they can do is limited only by the attorney's imagination and willingness to mentor when it comes to new tasks. If you utilize paralegals in your practice already, talk with them about their abilities—you may be surprised!

The specific tasks a paralegal may perform varies widely between areas of practice. However, many generalizations can be made. Under the supervision of an attorney, a paralegal may:

- Plan, develop, and manage cases;
- Research and analyze legal issues;
- Analyze an issue or case and make recommendations to the attorney;
- Perform factual research and gather documentation;



A paralegal can provide substantive legal support to attorneys.

- Interview clients and witnesses and prepare them for deposition or trial;
- Prepare legal forms;
- Draft, analyze, and prepare responses to legal documentation (e.g., pleadings, discovery, contracts, settlements);
- Draft legal memoranda;
- Draft briefs;
- Document production;
- Trial preparation;
- Serve as a liaison between attorney, client, and opposing counsel;
- Maintain the docket; and

the list goes on.

If you're having a hard time thinking about what your paralegal might help you with, just think about all the things you do (short of UPL exceptions) and you'll have your answer.

For more information about the paralegal profession, check out the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals: <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/paralegals/>.

There you will find information on the economic benefits of utilizing paralegals, guidelines for the utilization of paralegals, and information on how paralegals can improve your practice.

The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice.