

Foreword

The practice of law is a profession, but a law practice is a business. As lawyers, we went to law school to study and learn the law. We did not go to business school to learn to run a law practice. We learned to provide legal analysis, advice, and guidance to clients based on our knowledge and understanding of the law. We continue to expand that knowledge and expertise through continuing education, research, and experience. Yet for a solo or small firm lawyer this role actually takes only a small portion of each day. If we stop to analyze our workload, much of it stems from organizing our cases, managing our calendar of activities and deadlines, timely communicating with others, and taking steps to ensure we get paid for our hard work. For many of us the average day also includes marketing activities, reviewing finances, and other activities of running a business.

The key to a successful practice is providing professional legal services coupled with responsible management and savvy decision-making to keep the business running effectively, ethically and profitably. There are many resources that help, but not one that helps immigration lawyers from the beginning of their new practice and can be consulted repeatedly by solo and small firm lawyers (wherever they are in their career) over the life of an immigration practice.

Until now.

I first met Ruby soon after she opened a satellite office in Dubai, UAE (where her husband was transferred) but kept most of her firm operations based in her hometown of Houston. While there she not only maintained her practice, she grew it using many of the techniques and technologies she shares in this book. We've continued to work together on various AILA committees since that time, and I've watched her grow her firm even more since she and her family returned to the States. During this time, I've witnessed her passion for building and managing her firm. I've watched her share those strategies and successes during her tenure as chair of the AILA National Practice Management Committee, through her work as a member of the AILA Innovation Task Force, as author of practice management articles, and as a frequent presenter at AILA conferences nationwide.

That's why I'm very excited that Ruby is now sharing her experiences, ideas, and passion for building and managing a successful and rewarding law practice in one place. From her thoughts on building a mission-based practice to her empowering philosophy for taking necessary and appropriate risks, this book is that one resource to have on your desk as you build your own law practice into that successful professional business you've hoped it could be.

My best wishes to Ruby on the success of this book, and my best wishes to you on the success of your law practice.

Reid F. Trautz

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