

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE IN HELENA MONTANA.

A The building blocks of a solid Private Practice

1. Trusting/hardworking honest partners and associates.
2. Supportive staff assistants who know their jobs, appreciate their positions and are happy to serve the firm and represent that happiness and contentness in service to clients and messaging to the public.
3. Freedom of attorneys to learn, improve their ability and service to clients
4. Building space that offers freedom of movement, places to work without interference.
5. Promotion of reputation by consistency of performance at a high level for clients getting the best possible outcome
6. Base of strong reputation for expertise with defense attorneys, adjusters and companies they represent.

B. Case Management Intake Through Settlement-Trial

1. Client

- a. build client trust from outset
- b. Imbed reasonable expectations in clients from first meeting
- c. Stay in contact with clients
 - i. Return their calls promptly
 - ii. Let them know you are moving things forward

2. Avoid Trap/Frivolous/Non-economic claims

- a. Say no – be honest “not I’m too busy”, I don’t see economic justification ex. Binky caused baby to turn blue but one visit to ER
- b. Small claim traps
 - i. Costs will eat up value

3. Claim/Case Categories – Plaintiff – PI

- a. Med negligence
- b. Slip/trip and fall
- c. Other negligence
- d. Work comp
- e. SSDI
- f. Employment related
 - i. Termination
 - ii. Discrimination – human rights
 - iii. Whistleblower
 - iv. Other

- g. Auto/Truck/Motorcycle crashes (most are insurance claims-medical payments driver)
 - Liability limits
 - Underinsured motorists (UIM)
 - Driver/business/employer/third party
- h. Consumer Protection Act
 - i. How bad is the harm
 - ii. How long did it last
 - iii. How interfering is it

4. Golden Rule – Treatment of Clients

- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
- Truthful
- Establish trust
- Return calls promptly
- Seek accurate answers
- Don't guess or speculate
- Get Help (other attorneys or law school professors)
- Never suggest final value

5. Keep Claims Moving Forward

- Injury practice - update bills, wage loss (keep in touch)
- Maximum improvement to settle unless must settle now
- Working a claim
- Letters of Rep to adjusters
- Return forms – medical, other
- Fee agreements
- Letters to medical providers
- Getting best medical care – important for injury clients

Areas of Practice – Referral to other Firms

1. Bodily injury
2. Estates/Wills
3. Bankruptcy
4. Real Estate
5. Commercial Transportation
6. Insurance Defense
7. Work Comp – we refer some
8. Patents/Copyright
9. Banking/Credit Card Co.
10. Collections – how
11. Divorce/Family
12. Criminal Law (DUI other MIP)
13. Environmental law
14. Administration
15. Tax Law – Revenue
16. Liquor licenses

RICK PYFER'S PRACTICE POINTERS (Private Law Practice)

1. Have fun at your job; you'll feel better and live longer.
2. Joke around with people it keeps a long job light.
3. Get the money now.
4. Be firm but don't show your clenched fist.
5. Be honest in every representation.
6. Don't answer with a speech if a short answer will do the trick.
7. People (all people) weight your word on the scale of past performance. It's hard to regain credibility after a lie is told.
8. Faulty recollection can be saved by regular notations. Write promises down.
9. Answer phone messages promptly.
10. Don't lead people on to believe they have something when they don't. that's very dangerous.
11. Don't take a case that is "questionable".
12. You must believe in the case to sell it and its merits- applies to liability and damages.
13. Serve the community.
14. Don't waste time on garbage issues.
15. Don't hesitate to dump incorrigible or overly demanding clients who are impossible to satisfy, you will never win them over.