

PARALEGALS CONNECT

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“Our Groups are accelerating Paralegals, Future Paralegals, and Future Attorneys Worldwide”

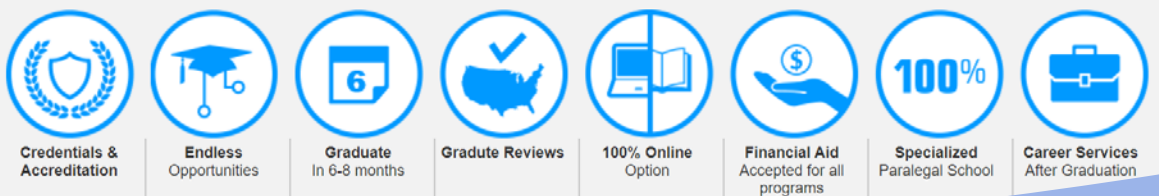


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DELIVERED.**



Currently, our groups have approximately **21,600+ combined active members worldwide.**

WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

*“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 five 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 paralegal career.

Currently, our groups have approximately **21,600+ combined active members worldwide**. We have become the largest paralegal networking group worldwide!



[Paralegals Connect](#)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect

Our first and largest 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.

[Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect](#)

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: Employment Board](#)

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.

[Paralegals Connect: Study Group](#)

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.

[LSAT Connect](#)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/LSATConnect

A group designed for those studying for the Law School Admission Test.

[Paralegals Connect: Instagram](#)

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MEET OUR ADMINS

These are the busy women behind the scenes of Paralegals Connect. We work hard to make these professional, successful groups, and create ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys become a legal success!



Crystal Cornett
Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com

Founder of Paralegals Connect. Crystal has been a Paralegal since 2004. She earned her first Paralegal Certificate from University of Houston in March 2006.

Crystal received the degree of Associate of Applied Science from Center for Advanced Legal Studies and her second Paralegal Certificate 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 Law, Guardianship, Social Security, and heavy litigation in Intellectual Property and Bankruptcy.

Crystal currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas.

Crystal also serves on the Paralegal Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.



Eunice Colón
Eunice@ParalegalsConnect.com

Eunice Colón has been a paralegal since early 2003. Eunice has been residing in Houston, Texas where she earned a Bachelor's in Psychology and Spanish from the University of Houston.

Eunice is currently preparing to take the LSAT Exam and achieve her goal to attend law school and become an attorney. She is currently a twelve-year paralegal for one of Houston's best Real Estate and Commercial Litigation Firms.

Aside of preparing to take the LSAT Exam, Eunice owns and runs a small handmade jewelry and jewelry supply online business. She has acquired extensive knowledge in the creation of Facebook Groups and various other marketing projects including websites. Eunice's ability to multitask together with her ability to think and operate in English and Spanish has opened many doors and continues to be a great asset in her professional growth.

MEET OUR AFFILIATES

We would like to thank our Affiliates because they make it possible to print and distribute our Newsletter to our members and various paralegal schools and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **21,600+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

**Only Affiliates are permitted to advertise within our Groups.*



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliates 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 with Paralegals Connect, please contact Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com for additional information 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.

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Michele L. Savoy, Inc.

Are you and your clients paying for services and extras that you are not getting or simply do not need during the pandemic? Office space and staff cost a lot of money that court reporting agencies are still paying for, and they pass on those costs in their invoices for court reporting services to you. I am a merit-certified freelance stenographic court reporter with over thirty years of experience, and I can offer you cost-effective saving by providing stenographic services via Zoom, Webex, and other online platforms.

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Bev-y /'be-vē/

n./ a large group of people or things of a particular kind

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Work Mistake? Fess Up to Your Mess Up and Fix It!

By: Tami Riggs

At some point in their career, every working professional has made a mistake that shined the performance spotlight on them front and center. Typical mistakes made by new – and experienced – paralegals include misfiling documents, missing deadlines due to poor calendaring practices, failing to proofread for typos, inaccurately recording billable time, and coming to client meetings unprepared. And let's face it...we've all sent that cringeworthy email to an unintended recipient. We have all ended an important call by accidentally hanging up.

Colossal gaffes that result in termination are rare, but errors made by paralegals and legal assistants can have significant consequences and rippling impacts on a law firm, up to and including a claim for malpractice. While this may be an extreme outcome, it is important to understand that each practice is responsible for inaccuracies or omissions made by its' legal staff. Mistakes can seriously harm a case, lead to an unfavorable court ruling, and cause major setbacks.

Most workplace blunders will not cost you your job. The vast majority are forgivable and will not merit a write-up. However, when mistakes happen, everyone suffers. Your employer will want to see that you are aware of the implications, that you understand the behavior behind the mistake, and that you will make changes in your work going forward to prevent a recurrence.

The mark of a good employee is how they recover from a mistake. There is a way to respond that shows strength of character and accountability.

How to turn \$#@% Into... Ahhh



Here are three critical actions to take to successfully bounce back from a mistake without losing your reputation and professional credibility:

1. *Accept responsibility and tell your boss immediately.*

Once a mistake has been made, it is important to have a positive response instead of a knee jerk reaction. Promptly acknowledge the error and own up to it. Do not ignore it. Do not make excuses. Do not place blame on others. Leave out the but's and the if's. Apologize and move on to the resolution.

2. *Take corrective action and offer a solution.*

Determine what went wrong. Was it more embarrassing or critical? Assess the damage and how you can get things back on track. Then, implement a response to minimize the negative impact and remedy the mistake.

3. *Learn from what happened.*

Put the mistake in perspective and address the cause. What were the underlying issues? Was it a careless oversight or an ongoing pattern of poor performance? There is a big difference between making a mistake once and making it over and over. Did any of your work processes contribute? Do you have the required skills, knowledge, training, and attitude? Are there any areas where you need to improve? If so, make some adjustments and establish a plan to address the deficiencies. Nothing will undermine your success more than correcting a mistake only to make it again.

A time will come when you spectacularly mess up at work. Mistakes can and do happen. They happen because people are not infallible. I have made several mistakes in my own career. It has given way to one simple perspective: **fess up to your mess up**. Here is what you say, "This is what happened; I am responsible. This is how I am going to fix it. This is what I have learned."

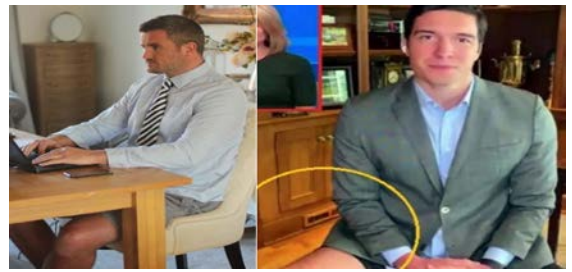


ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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](#).

Do's and Don'ts to Keep in Mind to Make Your Virtual Interview the Best Possible

By: C Brian Devinney



A lot of things have changed in this weird, wild, and sometimes wonderful world we live in. Like many, my life and how I interact with people has gone from "face to face" to "face to face but with six feet between us and a mask on." (Side note: My dating has not been all that romantic with six feet between us.)

Until March 2020, Zoom was for most either an educational TV program, the sound made by a fast-moving vehicle, or the first syllable of the popular fitness program created by Alberto Perez. Since then, it has become the home to game nights, cocktail hours, a Broadway salute to Stephen Sondheim, office conferences, and, now, job interviews. If you are popping your head out of your COVID 19 lockdown to see what is available in your job market, you will want to be prepared to do so virtually. First impressions are everything. Here are some do's and don'ts to keep in mind to make your virtual interview the best possible:

DO make sure your internet is working properly. You will want a strong signal. If you are using a desktop computer, I recommend restarting your computer. This will clear any memory cache, so your computers resources are not being used by other programs. You do not want your video to buffer, freeze, or completely drop out.

DO know how to operate and use the video conferencing platform being used for the interview. If there are technical issues are your end that are within your control, knowing how to troubleshoot on the spot will be key. Make sure that your microphone is working with a proper output volume. This is a great way to show that you can stay cool under pressure.

DON'T sit with a lighting source behind you. This includes natural sunlight through a window or lamps. Your face and facial features will be obscured. The light will be highlighting the back of your head and not your face.

DO use headphones. If they are wireless/Bluetooth, make sure that they are fully charged. This goes hand in hand with the first tip. If your wireless headphones die mid-interview, you will need to know how to quickly adjust to a different audio output so you can hear and be heard.

DO make sure the camera is framing you properly. If possible, frame yourself as if you are posing for your headshot. You want the interviewer to focus on you and not the macramé wall hanging your neighbor made for you.

DON'T sit with a patterned or busy pattern behind you. The focus needs to be on you. You may think that sitting before a full bookcase will look great. However, they may be reading the book titles behind you rather than paying attention to what you are saying.

DO dress appropriately for the background. The colors you choose to wear are important. **DON'T** wear white if you are sitting in front of a white background. You will look like your head is floating in midair. If that is not possible, **DO** wear a jacket. It will break up the colors and reduce the "floating" effect. If you are using a color background, **DON'T** wear a lighter or darker shade of that color. It will not video well. Find a complimentary color that goes with the background and looks great on you.

DON'T use a virtual background. My Zoom background for virtual game nights makes it look like that I am in contestant's row of The Price is Right. That works for Cards Against Humanity, but it looks **BAD** for an interview.

DO keep in mind there may be a lag or delay between when you end their answer and when they hear the end of your answer. It is okay to sit there and say nothing. They may still be hearing your answer.

Zoom has become a big part of our lives - both personally and professionally. Knowing how to use this program to present yourself in the best way possible can give you an advantage over other candidates. I recommend practicing with friends or family in the days leading up to your interview. Perfect your angle, your outfit, your audio, your connection and more. By doing so, you are increasing your chances of getting the job.

You may be asking how I know these tips work. These are all the steps I took prior to my Zoom interview this past June...and I got the job.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

C. Brian Devinney is a civil litigation paralegal based in Jacksonville, Florida. In the past he has trekked through Nepal, worked at 13 Tony Awards, was slapped by Katie Couric, and once drove his family crazy by placing one killer, two rooms, and no weapon in the secret envelope while playing Clue.



Pursue your interest in law and become a paralegal.

Center for Advanced Legal Studies (CALs) is a private, nationally accredited paralegal college. Established in 1987, our focus is providing exceptional paralegal education to our students and dedicated career services for our graduates.



Specialized Paralegal Training

"100 percent of our resources are devoted to paralegal education and training."

What is a Paralegal?

- + Paralegals and legal assistants perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research, investigating the facts of a case, interviewing clients and witnesses, and drafting documents to file with the court.
- + Paralegals and legal assistants are found in all types of organizations, but most work for law firms, corporate legal departments, or government agencies.

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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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Council on Occupational Education¹



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Texas Workforce Commission



Texas Veterans Commission

 American Association for Paralegal Education



National Federation of Paralegal Associations



National Association of Legal Assistants



Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas

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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English Composition II
General Psychology
American Government I
Introduction to Speech Communication
Anatomy & Physiology I

Advanced Electives

+ 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

Keeping Our Distance Since 2006

The Advancement of Distance Education at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#)

By: Eric H. Happe

Skepticism. Acceptance. Preference. Necessity.

Over the past 15 years, we have witnessed the rise of distance education and its progression from being viewed with skepticism to acceptance, from acceptance to preference, and now, from preference to necessity. In 2006, no one at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies \(CALs\)](#) imagined that in little more than a decade we would go from having a few hundred campus-based paralegal students, with none online, to having no campus-based students and over two hundred online.

Unlike many educational institutions who scrambled to implement virtual learning as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, CALs was able to migrate all its campus-based students to online delivery in less than a weekend. It helped that by March 2020 five out of six students at CALs were already taking their classes online. The skepticism many previously felt regarding online classes had long since shifted to a strong preference for them, and those who selected campus-based classes chose them more as a matter of personal preference and convenience than from any concern over the effectiveness of distance learning. We miss being on campus and seeing our students, and we know they feel the same, but we continue to successfully educate and train students to become paralegals, just as we have since 1987.

This is different! Who moved my cheese!?!

In 2006, students at CALs had two options on how to attend: morning or evening classes. Morning classes met Monday through Thursday from 8 AM to noon, and evening classes met Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings from 6 to 10 PM. Both schedules were demanding, but the evening schedule especially so. Houston traffic notwithstanding, attending class until 10 o'clock at night required a remarkable amount of grit and determination. Kudos to all those who prevailed. You impress us still. Would anyone do that now?

CALs had been approved that same year to offer instruction in a blended, or hybrid format. This meant evening students, after completing their first 4 courses attending three nights per week, could attend live class on campus just one night per week thereafter, and complete the remainder of their work asynchronously when convenient for them using the learning management system WebCT. It looked like a sure winner, and CALs made the decision to enroll new evening students exclusively under the blended learning format, and to offer this option to current students as well.

Then came the pushback. Many current students were wary of the format change and wanted to continue having live class three nights per week. **What?**



This was an unexpected response, but CALs stuck by its decision to have mandatory live class just one night per week, as scheduled, and the instructor would hold optional classes and expanded lectures on the other days, as was done before. It came as no surprise when not a single student attended the optional lectures, even those who were the most vocal about wanting them. Attending live class one night per week and doing the rest of the work on their own time was pretty nice after all. In a matter of weeks, students grew to love the new way of attending classes and having a little more time at home. Soon, this new format became the standard for all evening classes.

Thank you, Internet. Thank you, iPhone.

Learning at a distance has been around for decades, but only recently has it become the rich, interactive experience students expect. CALs waited until synchronous live classroom technology had matured into proven, stable platforms before offering 100% online classes. Students needed to interact live with their instructors and classmates, and to see and hear them, with no limits to the teaching and learning experience. By 2009, evening classes had proven that 2 hours of live lecture per class each week was sufficient to cover all essential topics. Students were doing well completing the asynchronous activities on their own. Learning outcomes and employment numbers remained high. High speed Internet was widely available. It was time to move completely online.

CALS adopted a platform called Horizon Wimba for its live classes. Perhaps a funny name, but Wimba allowed students and instructors to meet live online and it supported audio, video, whiteboards, application sharing, breakout rooms, polling questions, and many other key features. On July 27, 2009 [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) started its first group of 6 students taking paralegal classes 100% online. Exactly eleven years later, on July 27, 2020, CALS started 60 new online paralegal students.

There is no question that none of this would be achievable without the Internet. It is also likely that the universal appeal of smartphones, like Apple's iPhone, has helped create a sense of comfort and familiarity with technology that had never existed before. Questions regarding 'how?' became 'why not?' and as technology gets better, even greater advancements are possible.

What are online paralegal classes at CALS like today?

Students attending [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) are afforded access to many leading teaching and learning platforms. CALS utilizes Canvas LMS for its learning management system. Canvas is in use by more than 4,000 institutions globally and is the preferred LMS of many top tier universities. In Canvas, students can access their courses, receive course announcements, view weekly course content, watch videos and prerecorded lectures, participate in class discussion questions, submit their assignments, take tests and quizzes, and see their grades with instructor feedback. These activities they do on their own time asynchronously when its most convenient for them.

Live classes are presented via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Unlike repurposed business meeting software, Collaborate was designed from the ground up for education. Collaborate allows instructors and students to see and hear each other during live classes, view the whiteboard and PowerPoint presentations, participate in breakout room activities, and follow along with their instructor through application sharing to edit and review legal documents. While it is recommended to join live classes with a laptop or desktop for best experience, students can also attend live classes on their smartphone or tablet when necessary. All that is needed is a good, reliable, Internet connection.

To combat the ever-increasing cost of textbooks and provide more convenient access to learning materials, all students at CALS are issued Cengage Unlimited accounts and have access to nearly all textbooks electronically.


Students can access their textbooks immediately on their laptop or desktop computer, or on their phone or tablet. Through Cengage Unlimited students can elect to rent their textbooks for just \$7.99 each, or even purchase them if desired. The choice is theirs.



All students at CALS are issued Microsoft 365 and @paralegal.edu email accounts. Students can install Microsoft Office applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook on up to five computers or devices while active in their program. After graduation, alumni keep their Microsoft 365 accounts with access to web versions of Office applications along with their professional @paralegal.edu email address.

For conducting electronic legal research, students at CALS have access to Fastcase, which provides simplified access to primary authority and a less intimidating research experience for new users. After their first two classes, all Paralegal Certificate students are issued Westlaw accounts for the remainder of their program. Many consider Westlaw to be the industry standard in electronic legal research.

As students' progress through their studies, they are also introduced to ProDoc, Clio, CaseMap, TimeMap, and Trial Director. It takes a lot of practice to master these software titles, but the first step for many in becoming familiar with them happens at CALS.



PARALEGAL.EDU
CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

Upcoming Class Start Dates Paralegal Certificate

Application Deadline	September 4, 2020
Enrollment Deadline	September 11, 2020
Classes Begin	September 21, 2020
Graduation	May 16, 2021

Is Online Education the new normal?

Like you, all of us at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) desire for things to return to normal as quickly as possible. We look forward to students enrolling to attend on-campus classes soon. Many students choose CALS for their paralegal education and training because of our ability to provide both morning and Saturday campus classes and 100% online options.

Online paralegal classes are interactive, engaging, and equivalent in almost every way to the outcomes realized in traditional classroom settings. When online courses were first being developed at CALS, we applied our 20 plus years' experience in campus based paralegal education to inform decisions on how to best present paralegal classes online. When on campus classes resume, we are confident they will benefit from the experience of being completely online — and will be all the better for it.

If you are considering enrolling in a paralegal program, to either begin or advance your paralegal career, be assured that online opportunities are widely available and effective. Contact [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#), if you would like to know more about our experience with distance education and what to expect from an effective and engaging virtual environment.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Eric H. Happe is Director of Distance Education at Center for Advanced Legal Studies in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of the Paralegal Certificate program and worked as a paralegal for six years before returning to Center for Advanced Legal Studies in various administrative capacities. Eric managed the development of online paralegal programs at CALS and works closely with faculty and staff to provide students with quality paralegal education and training opportunities both on campus and online. Please feel free to connect with him on LinkedIn.

CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

BORING ONLINE CLASSES ARE A THING OF THE PAST

Afraid you'll just be reading your textbooks and uploading assignments? Not at CALS.

Live online classes are delivered with **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**, the industry leading platform designed for education.

In Collaborate, students can see and hear their instructors and classmates in real time from their computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Go ahead, raise your hand and ask a question. That's why you're here. That's why we're here.

Outside of live class sessions students submit assignments, take online quizzes, and interact in lively online class discussions in **Canvas LMS**.

The paralegal profession isn't boring, and your path to get there shouldn't be either. If you have a passion for the law, and feel like online paralegal classes are the best option for you, we are confident you will enjoy your time at CALS.

Want to experience Blackboard Collaborate and see for yourself? Contact your admission representative for a consultation and demonstration. They look forward to hearing from you.

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Why Work with A Paralegal Business Coach?

By: Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC



Are you ready to build a paralegal business?

Let's Team Up and Get Started!

Why do entrepreneurs work with business coaches?

It's a big decision. And it's a life-altering decision that requires both a financial and a time commitment. If you have already started a business, you may think you have already made a life-altering decision, so why bother making another one? Or you could be a paralegal dreaming of being your own boss, yet where do you start? Whatever stage you are in with your paralegal business, a business coach can help.

To maximize the return on your investment, find a business coach familiar with your industry, niche, and one that is more experienced than you. Yet, I still have not told you the benefits of working with a coach. With no further delay.....

Five BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A BUSINESS COACH

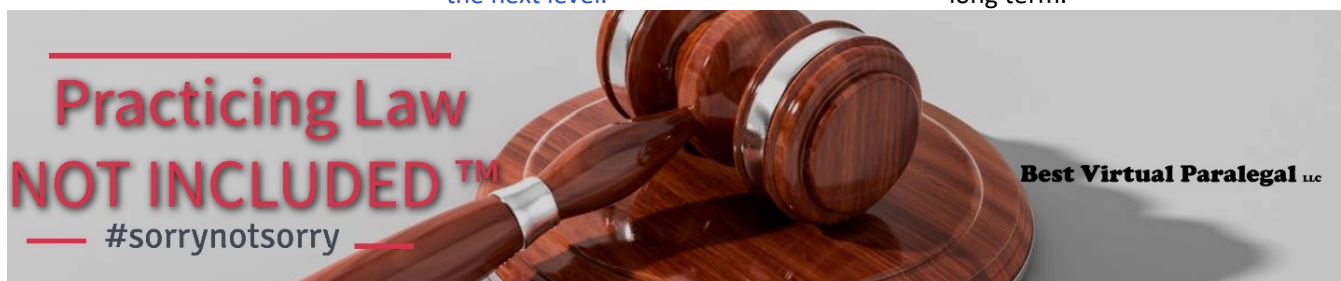
1. Accountability. We can help to encourage and support your goals, keep you on track, teach you about yourself, your business, and your industry. Push you when you need it, so you reach your full potential.

2. Business Growth. A business coach is like having a highly experienced person on your team, and the value that they offer to you is priceless. If you want to grow as an athlete, what do you do? You hire a coach to help you become better and grow into the athlete you want to become. Business coaches can help build a new business from the ground up, advising you through setting up your business, define its mission and goals, and put in place both long-term and short-term strategies aimed at giving the business long-term sustainability. Likewise, a business coach can help seasoned business owners, who have hit a plateau in their company's growth. Coaches are magnificent for helping you figure out how to take your business to the next level.

3. Empowerment. By transferring **Education + Training + Implementation = Knowledge to YOU**, a business coach can empower you. A coach can help you believe you have what it takes to do what you are trying to do. However, there is one caveat, coaches cannot do the work for you. For the relationship to work, you must do the work.

4. Saves You Heartache. Nobody likes failure and heartache. Wouldn't it be nice to have someone in your back-pocket warning you of dangers and pitfalls? That is what is so great about working with a business coach! An excellent seasoned paralegal business coach will save you valuable time, money, and other resources. We can help you avoid common mistakes that can lead to frustration or worse, long term financial losses.

5. Eminent Networking. You cannot tell me you know everyone you will need to know to grow a business effectively. A paralegal business coach can help align you with the right people and tools at the right time. Again, saving time and money long term.



Paralegal Business Coach A Glorious Return on Investment

A good paralegal business coach gives you free tips, tricks, and hacks to fill your immediate want and need. That is just a band-aid on an already complicated life-changing journey. Most folks do not reap a superb return on quick fixes. Alternatively, a seasoned paralegal business coach gives you the tools to take you from where you are to where you want to be by giving you long term strategies.

Working with the right paralegal business coach is one of the best business investments you can make for your venture. So, I will ask again, are you ready to build a paralegal business empire? What is stopping you from turning in your timecard and replacing it with a business license?

Let your journey begin. Let's discuss the next steps!

Schedule a free [30-minute hello session today!](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS is a renowned, award-winning litigation paralegal, entrepreneur, motivational speaker, and paralegal business coach. She has dedicated her 30-year career to helping attorneys, paralegals, and legal professionals realize their greatness and panic less during the process.



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Why *InfoTrack's* Automation is the Secret to More Productive Court Filing

By: Alex Braun

You may have noticed **InfoTrack** in the flurry of new sponsors for Paralegals Connect—but you are forgiven if you ignored us.

Many litigation paralegals already have their favorite eFiling provider. They all look a bit similar, and follow the same rules laid down by the court. So, what is the point of switching horses midstream?

The short answer is that **InfoTrack** takes a fundamentally different approach to court filing—one which lightens your workload and helps you become more productive to the firm (or firms) you service.

InfoTrack integrates with popular case management systems (like Clio, LEAP, Smokeball, and others) to automate many of the most time-consuming data entry tasks associated with court filing. This means paralegals who use it can prepare and file documents faster, with a far lower risk of mistakes. Much of this automation is concentrated in the following areas:

Pre-filing data.

eFiling is usually repetitive work for paralegals. You fill in all the blanks on your court forms, only to retype the same information when filing a case online or adding matter records in your Case Management System (CMS).

Using the power of integration, **InfoTrack** can help you reduce this burden by copying key information you have already entered across platforms, or even from the court docket itself. It also works for tasks subsequent to your filing, such as ordering nationwide service of process.

Automatic document management.

With **InfoTrack**, you launch the eFiling process from your CMS, selecting documents to file directly from your matter record. Once conformed copies are issued by the court, they automatically save back to your CMS.

This eliminates the need for a separate storage and organization system, and greatly diminishes the likelihood of accidentally filing documents from the wrong case.

Automatic expensing. Court filing costs can be very confusing, making basic accounting tasks for even a single court filing more of a headache than most people think. In a typical invoice from their eFiling service provider, paralegals may have to reconcile three fee categories:

- ❖ **Statutory fees.** Court-imposed fees you must pay to file, regardless of how you do it.

- ❖ **EFSP fees.** The website you use to file your case will typically charge a nominal fee for placing the order through their service. Because providers sometimes have different operating costs for different courts, these fees can vary by jurisdiction, especially across state lines. Sometimes providers have no EFSP fee, because they derive their revenue from another source (such as the payment processing fee).

- ❖ **Payment processing fees.** If you are paying with a credit card on file, you usually get charged a percentage of the total transaction amount. If you are paying through a bank transfer, there is normally a small flat fee.

No matter which fees apply to you, **InfoTrack** automatically records all of them in your case management system's expense records as you file. And because there is no subscription cost, all eFiling expenses can be invoiced through to your client if desired.

How to try it

It is free to set up an **InfoTrack** account—you only pay if you place a filing. Those fees are competitive with the average eFiling service provider and can be automatically passed through on client invoices, so your firm absorbs none of the cost.

While **InfoTrack** can be used as a stand-alone service, it is most powerful when integrated with a case management system. The best way to get a preview customized to your setup is to schedule a 15-minute online demo with our team.

www.infotrack.com/efiling

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alex Braun



Multiple Uses for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) – Drones

By: Jackie Van Dyke

Drones are becoming ever more popular amongst aviation hobbyists. Drones are proving to serve an essential service to the populace during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drones are being used in a wide variety of ways, from conducting airstrikes in the Middle East (New York Times, September 2019) to photographing homes for sale (WTOP News, June 2020).

Drones can capture footage of tornado devastation as well as wildfire destruction. Here, however, is where one problem lies. Scientific American reported several years ago that a toy drone flown by a private party trying to film the blaze disrupted firefighting efforts. The real concern was a mid-air collision between firefighter aircraft and the drone.

Do we need an air traffic control system for these low-flying unmanned aircraft? Currently, a license is required to operate a drone, but no permission is necessary to fly below 400 feet. The FAA recommends keeping one's drone in the visual line of sight and to not fly at night.

Drones are even promoted as being able to detect fevers during the COVID-19 crisis. CVS and UPS are both reporting the delivery of prescription medications to those living in retirement communities, serving those identified as high-risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Drones have been used to detect large groups assembling in California, Connecticut, Florida, and New Jersey to monitor and promote social distancing. (Marketplace Tech May 2020) Should we be concerned about this increasing use of surveillance? There has been considerable public discourse in the past regarding drone use versus privacy concerns.

Drone law expert Dawn Zoldi says, "now is the time to rethink overly constraining regulatory and policy structures...." Zoldi points out in her May 2020 podcast "Drones in the Pandemic" that drones are the perfect tool for "delivering packages and medicine, monitoring the environment, assisting the media, and so much more."

How does a paralegal keep apprised of all the rules and regulations should a client become a party to a drone dispute? The challenge is that federal and state regulations may differ. Who controls air space, and at what level? Who is required to have a license? And, individual states have implemented various laws unique to their region.

As of April 2020, 43 states have enacted drone laws outlining the operation of drones. The laws vary.

FOR EXAMPLE:

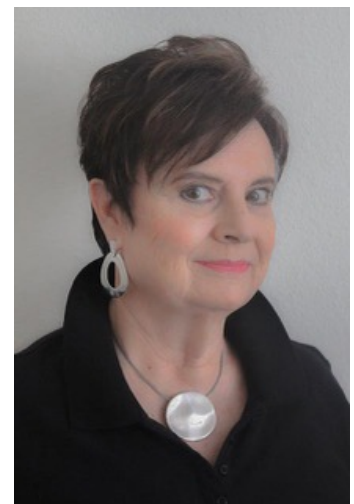
- ❖ **California** law makes it a misdemeanor to interfere with first responders doing their job during an emergency.
- ❖ **Delaware** makes it a felony offense to operate over a correctional facility.
- ❖ **Montana** law "specifies that information obtained from a drone is admissible as evidence during the investigation of a motor vehicle crash on a public roadway."
- ❖ **New Jersey** "prohibits UAS from transferring or delivering medical cannabis."

- ❖ **Wisconsin** prohibits using a drone to interfere with hunting or fishing. (National Conference of State Legislatures 2019)

As a paralegal, the ever-changing world of drone use can be fascinating. Transportation law is being amended frequently. A best practice is to become familiar with the drone laws in the state in which one's client may be operating a drone. Subscribing to drone newsletters and bookmarking the FAA site for current regulations are paramount to keeping apprised of the latest happenings regards unmanned aircraft systems.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jackie Van Dyke is a certified paralegal, professor in paralegal studies, copy editor, published author, writing coach, and paralegal student mentor. She formerly worked as a senior trademark paralegal for an international nonprofit corporation. She can be reached at jvandyke@thewritingparalegal.com





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PERSONAL INJURY

Personal Injury cases can be complicated medically, especially if your client has multiple injuries and possible pre-existing conditions. Determining what injuries are consistent with the acute injury and what conditions were exacerbated by the acute injury can be a challenge. As an attorney, **you need to know ALL of what is involved with the medical issues of your client**. With my decades of experience as a Registered Nurse, I'm ready to assist in understanding your case fully.

CRIMINAL CASES

My legal nurse specialty is in forensics, as a Certified Forensic Nurse and Certified Forensic Consultant. My forensic education has included adult and pediatric sexual assault training (SANE), forensic nursing, nurse death investigations and a Bachelor of Science degree. As a Certified Forensic Nurse and a Nurse Expert Consultant, **I help criminal defense attorneys** on cases involving injuries such as gunshot wounds, stabbings, strangulation, assaults and issues of child abuse. I also provide mitigation reports to aid in the reduction of sentencing for your clients and prepare cross-examination questions for you against the DA's experts.



Recently, one of my personal injury attorney's came to me to request that I look at a woman's medical records and write up a report about her injuries, how they happened and what her future medical issues, and treatment would look like. The opposition's insurance adjuster was holding out on giving her the final \$25,000, but potential future medical issues are an important issue in a case like this one. I was so happy that my report not only had the adjuster approve of the \$25,000 payment, but also opened up the attorney's ability to pursue an additional \$250,000 in uninsured motorist insurance money. These amounts were not obvious to the attorney or the adjuster, but my expertise in looking at the medical records meant this attorney didn't leave money on the table.

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Paralegal Behind the Scenes

By: Hanna Bain

At 19 years old, I decided it was time to write a book about life as a Paralegal. So much had taken place in the one year that I had done/worked as a Paralegal, and I thought it would be a best seller. I never actually had the time to sit down and write because I was working overtime and did not have a day or minute to myself. Now, at 22 years old, I hesitate to publish the book even though it has a boat load of stories that were compiled and cover experiences, and there was a lot that went out being a Managing Paralegal at a firm. The most important thing that happened out of the initial three years at the firm I used to work for are the experiences I gained, the good relationships I got with my clients, and the lessons I learnt from the opportunity I had.

In the last two years once would never think (or at least I would never) that a global pandemic would occur and shake the world to the core. I would have never thought that there can actually be a pause button on issued our day to day activities, whether it be back to back meetings with clients, attorneys, or just a screeching halt on the day to day workflow. The Real Estate transactions from contracts to closings, the civil litigation matters from the initial filing of the pleading to the settlement of the case, the divorce cases from pleadings to the draft of the judgment of divorce; that all came to a stop in NY for a good month and within all those practice areas are experiences that are waiting to be shared.

Being a managing paralegal had me and my team exposed to a lot, and all of us were burnt out. We answered to a bunch of attorneys who could not get their act together and it was tough, but there was something to learn out of it all, as we really all managed behind the scenes and pulled the strings together to keep things moving. Don't misunderstand – it was very hard and frustrating to be the punching bag of the firm. If someone did not activate a proper protocol or even one slight deviation, somehow it was always my fault and I was always to blame on everything, even if the food did not come on time for the staff meeting. Every day I sat down at the end of the day and wrote one positive matter that happened during the day that ranged from "I did not get stuck in traffic" to "The clerk in Court accepted the motion without an issue." When I started doing this on my own, I made the entire team do it, as it really shifted our mindset completely and helped us become more thankful.

Specifically, one piece of advice I would offer to everyone is even if something seems not right, and supposedly you are being blamed or hollered at for something you did not do, nor was in your control, never judge the other person/persons involved. Make time to speak it out civilly like good people and be open in communication. Sometimes there are one-sided conversations and that's hard, and people judge.

I know I am not alone in this paralegal journey, and I am sure there are others out there who have had it worse and harder than I have. And yet, through it all, always try to remember that what we do makes a positive difference in people's lives, and I hope that we can all continue to make a difference in the legal world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hanna Bain

Hanna Bain lives in NY and currently works as a freelance paralegal with a special focus on Real Estate Law. She has experience in Foreclosure Defense, Matrimonial/Family Law, Civil Litigation, Debt Settlement/Credit Repair, and Intellectual Property. Hanna is a workout fanatic and has been mentoring paralegals closely for over 2 years.

Hanna can be reached at hannabain3172@gmail.com for any questions or just to say hi!



What is a Legal Translation?

A country's legal system requires the translation of certain documents for legal purposes. In the United States, for example, documents written in other languages should have translations in English, if people are required to submit the documents for legal transactions, such as business deals, immigration, or court proceedings.

In some countries, especially those in Europe, only court-certified legal translators are allowed to do legal translations. In the United Kingdom and the United States, the requirements are not so strict. A professional translator who has exposure and experience in law and legal systems can handle legal translations. Some federal agencies in the U.S. require the submission of certified translations, meaning a person must submit a certificate of accuracy along with the translation of the document.

Legal translation

A legal translation is not only applicable to the legal system. It is required by the civil system as well. If you are in business, you may need legal translations for your contracts, business proposals, financial and bank statements, trademark and patent filings, business licenses, confidentiality agreements or letters of credit.

Moreover, you may be requested to have your birth certificate, marriage license, passport, driver's license, insurance policies, and other personal papers translated.

There are several instances when you need translation services for your legal documents. If you are from another country and your documents are written in a language different from your destination country, it is best to inquire if you need a legal translation.

Legal translation services

Most types of legal relationships may need legal translation services. It encompasses administrative, commercial, civil, tax, constitutional, international, and criminal law. The most critical requirements for legal translation services are the correctness of the style and structure of the document, the precise use of the target language, specific terminology applicable to the subject matter and the expertise of the translator in the legal language.

In the delivery of legal translation services, the translator should see to it that the legal translation's purpose is observed. The legal translation may be needed to complete a notarial certification, for official documentation or for information.

Legal translation services demand that the translations should be accurate and error-free. An error in the translation will have legal consequences, which could result in property or financial damages, breakdown of business negotiations, cancellation of contracts or extended legal battles.

Hundreds of documents are considered as legal documents. Since you will be notified by the concerned organization or government agency about the documents that need legal translation, [we are going to give you some tips on how to find the right legal translation service provider.](#)

- Ensure that the legal translator is a subject matter expert and a native speaker of the target language.
- The translator should have long experience in legal translation.
- The translator must have extensive knowledge of the legal language and different legal systems.
- The translator should be able to meet deadlines.
- The translator should be up to date on the developments and changes in various legal systems
- The translator should be an expert in the rules of grammar and syntax of the language pair.

Translation of legal documents

When you need legal translation, it is important to find a translator or a translation agency that has expertise in the service. Keep in mind that legal translation needs a subject matter expert, who not only has experience in law and legal systems but also has knowledge of the legal language and terminology and excellent command of the source and target languages.

The translation of legal documents is demanding and has its own set of complexities. Aside from knowledge of legal terminology, there are legal clichés that have specific meanings. The legal translator should be an expert in selecting the correct linguistic structure that the content demands.

Certified legal translation

Government agencies and court systems often require certified legal translation. Certified legal translation renders a document valid. When an agency requests you to submit a certified legal translation of a document, you should order the translation of the particular document and request the translator or the translation agency doing the translation to have the translation certified.

The certification or the Certificate of Accuracy consists of a brief statement with the full name of the translator, who states that he or she translated the document from the source language to the target language. The translator also certifies his or her competency in the language pair. The certificate bears the signature of the translator or translation agency representative and the date of creation of the certification. Some government agencies likewise require notarization of the certificate of accuracy.

Translation of legal documents does not have room for any ambiguity. Ensure that you are getting legal translation with a high level of accuracy by getting in touch with us at eTranslation Services. You can reach us at **(800) 882-6058** or send us an email at contact@etranslationservices.com.



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