



THE PARALEGALS CONNECT QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Third Quarter

September 2023

Issue No. 21

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Paralegals Connect is the leading online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys. Currently, our groups have approximately 42.6k+ members worldwide.

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

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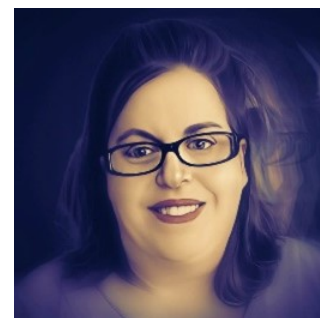
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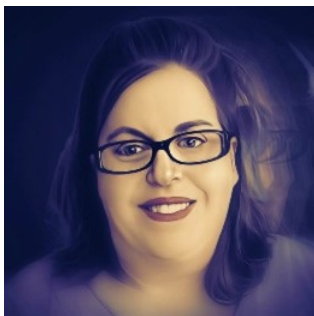
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**MEET the AFFILIATE PARTNERS
of Paralegals Connect**

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MEET THE FOUNDER OF PARALEGALS CONNECT

Crystal Cornett is the busy woman behind the scenes at Paralegals Connect. She works hard to keep Paralegals Connect a professional and helpful platform. Crystal is constantly creating new ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys to succeed in the legal industry!



Crystal Cornett, Founder of Paralegals Connect

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Crystal Cornett is a Paralegal with over 19 years of experience in the legal industry. Crystal earned her first Paralegal Certificate from the University of Houston in March 2006. In 2010, Crystal earned a second Paralegal Certificate and her degree from Center for Advanced Legal Studies. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX). Crystal is a commissioned Notary Public in the State of Texas and a Commissioned Remote Online Notary (RON). Since 2017, Crystal has served on the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.

Over the course of her paralegal career, Crystal has practiced in Family Law, Elder Law, Probate, Guardianships, Health Law, Social Security, heavy litigation in Intellectual Property and Bankruptcy, and residential and commercial Real Estate.

In 2013, Crystal founded Paralegals Connect, the leading online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys worldwide. Our mission is to empower individuals at every stage of their paralegal career journey, providing assistance to those considering a paralegal career, studying in a paralegal program, seeking employment, exploring virtual/freelance options, or looking to enhance their professional skills.

In 2018, Crystal founded The Paralegals Connect Magazine. Our magazine is published quarterly and features invaluable information and insights from legal field experts. With a membership of over 42,600 individuals worldwide, our reach and impact continue to grow. To stay connected and join the conversation, Paralegals Connect can be found on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, providing an interactive and vibrant online community for support and idea exchange. Visit linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect or www.ParalegalsConnect.com to learn more.

In February 2022, after 18 years of working as a paralegal, Crystal made the decision to resign from her position as a Real Estate paralegal marking the end of a successful chapter in a law office. However, Crystal's dedication to the legal community didn't stop there. In March 2022, she embarked on a new journey with Newhouse + Noblin, LLC, where she currently thrives as a paralegal recruiter. In addition to her recruiting responsibilities, Crystal also serves as a paralegal consultant, offering invaluable expertise and guidance in resume assistance, and sharing tips to help aspiring paralegals reach their career goals. With a passion for supporting paralegals and a wealth of industry knowledge, Crystal remains committed to making a positive impact in the legal community.

WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

*Where legal professionals
come together to accelerate
their careers.*

Founded in 2013, our community has experienced remarkable growth, evolving into four dynamic Facebook groups tailored specifically to the needs of aspiring and practicing paralegals, as well as future attorneys.

We understand the importance of staying informed and connected in the ever-evolving legal industry. Our mission is to provide you with valuable information, resources, and a supportive network to help you excel at every stage of your legal career journey.

Join our vibrant community of over **42.6k members worldwide**, and tap into a wealth of knowledge, guidance, and opportunities. Whether you're seeking career advice, professional development opportunities, or simply looking to connect with like-minded individuals, our groups are here to empower you.

Accelerate your paralegal journey, shape your future as a legal professional, and expand your horizons with Paralegals Connect.

Join our growing community today and unlock your potential in the legal world.



Website: www.ParalegalsConnect.com

LinkTree: linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect (Main Group) (21,401 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect

Our first and largest support 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.

Paralegals Connect: Employment Board (11,470 Members)

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.

Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect (4,862 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect

A group designed for Virtual, Freelance, or Independent Paralegals and those intending to break free of their 8-5 to go out on their own.

Paralegals Connect: Study Group (1,075 Members)

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.

Paralegals Connect: Instagram (1,388 Followers)

www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect

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Paralegals Connect: X (Twitter) (297 Members)

<https://Twitter.com/ParalegalsCnnct>

@ParalegalsCnnct

Paralegals Connect: Facebook Page (1,170 Followers)

www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: LinkedIn

Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9052061/> (856 Members)

Company Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/paralegals-connect>

Founder: Crystal Cornett: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/crystalcornett/>

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

MEET OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

We would like to thank our Affiliate Partners who make it possible to print and distribute the Paralegals Connect Magazine to our members, paralegal schools, and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate Partner with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **42.6k+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

**Only our Affiliate Partners are permitted to advertise within our Groups.*



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliate Partners 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 Partner with Paralegals Connect, please contact Crystal Cornett Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com 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.

Those seeking a more comprehensive preparation for their paralegal career, or those seeking their first college degree, can continue to the Associate of Applied Science Degree Paralegal Program which includes additional paralegal electives such as E-Discovery, Oil and Gas, Intellectual Property, and Immigration Law. Academic general education courses round out this paralegal degree program.



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Justice Solutions Group

Justice Solutions Group is a tech-enabled investigations and intelligence firm that is here to support paralegals and the clients they help every day. From deep-dive asset searches for litigation, judgment recovery and decedents, as well as expert surveillance, due diligence and background checks for law offices, companies, investors, and much more. they can handle it all.

Whatever It Takes Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group talks about 20 years as a real "P.I.", and the real reason he built JSG.

"IT'S ALL ABOUT RESULTS...AND HELPING GOOD PEOPLE THAT HELP OTHERS..."



Visit them at jsgfirm.com to learn more.

Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

Best Virtual Paralegal LLC ("BVP") ("The Attorney Panic Button™") is an American legal support and educational service provider for the legal professionals of post Covid-19. Its mission is to revolutionize the way attorneys and paralegals work together.

The Best Virtual Paralegal Team's vision is to solve legal professionals' problems by providing the best legal support services, legal admin services, consulting, coaching, and educational services at a fixed rate, when possible, and a fair hourly rate by frequently communicating with clients to help improve productivity, maximize resources, and control expenses. We aim to empower today's legal professionals to design a career and lifestyle that continuously grows at a sustainable rate, allowing them to achieve their career and lifestyle goals. The Best Virtual Paralegal Team is dedicated to helping lawyers and paralegals embrace technology, innovative strategies, mindset skills, and legal skills. As a result, together we can achieve the lifestyle that complements each legal professional's career journey.

The Best Virtual Paralegal team consists of advocates, legal support experts, educators, and trained coaches exclusively focused on helping attorneys, paralegals, and legal associations solve their unique problems. Our services and pricing strategies use a holistic approach to ensure we meet the needs of each client's unique problems, budget, and overall journey.

We'd love to collaborate with you and your local communities to increase your productivity, profitability, growth and more.



Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS, MCC is a legal support expert and thought leader, an experienced litigation paralegal, a coach, & the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVP). She is committed to helping legal professionals A.C.E. their company, community, & workplace culture journeys! If you see her in the Paralegals Connect groups, drop her a "hi or hello," and make her day!

Are you ready to scale, grow, & succeed? Let's Connect & Chat Today! [Contact with the Best Virtual Paralegal Team](#)

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The Paralegal Writer™

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of **The Paralegal Writer™**, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at The George Washington University and a Professor of Legal Research and Writing at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and also the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

Jackie's passion is to help legal professionals at all levels, including paralegal students, with professional document and letter design, persuasive memoranda writing, precise legal citations, and improved grammar and punctuation. The Paralegal Writer offers a quarterly signature course, "**Pen A Memo™**," to support applicants taking the Skills Exam and those looking to master the art of IRAC. The Paralegal Writer also recently launched a Citation Workshop Series, which provides an hour of practice monthly. Mastering Legal Writing in 8 Weeks will launch in early March! Payment options are always available.



Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you!

Email your questions to jackie@theparalegalwriter.com.

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Valedictorian Prep

For all aspiring future lawyers and current LSAT students.

Since there is a substantial percentage of paralegals who aspire to become lawyers and are currently preparing for the Law School Admission Test ("LSAT"), we decided to advertise our pro bono services to LSAT PROBONO BOOTCAMP, the Paralegals Connect community.

We are a company that believes in democratizing the tutoring industry as a whole and specifically for the LSAT. We believe that it is our moral duty to offer every student at least +5 LSAT points totally free by arming you with the training and understanding you need for an inevitable score increase of at least 5 points in general. That is why we are offering our March +20 hours pro bono LSAT Bootcamp to the Paralegals Connect community. We are hoping that we will bring a lot of value to every future LSAT taker willing to attend.

We will meet twice a week for 3-hour sessions. We will practice on real LSAT Sections, discuss assignments, and track our progress collectively.

Looking forward to seeing you at the sessions!
Feel free to message us for further details!



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The Disability Teacher

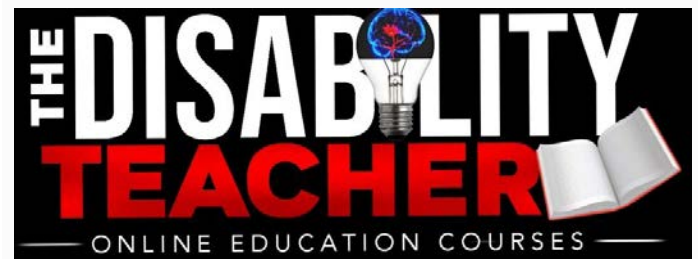
Most people are not aware that you do not have to be an attorney to get paid representing disabled people before the Social Security Administration. The main objective of The Disability Teacher® is to bring awareness to non-attorney representation of disabled people before the Social Security Administration. It is our mission to advance disability advocacy as a career choice for paralegals and other non-attorneys. Our mission is to **Educate, Equip and Empower** the Paralegal! We **Educate** paralegals for careers as Eligible for Direct Pay Non-Attorney (EDPNA) Representatives by teaching the knowledge and practical skills to **Equip** you to start and build your successful business as a Social Security Disability Advocate earning 25 % of back pay benefits up to \$7,200.00 per approval or favorable decision. We **Empower** you by teaching our step-by-step disability process, providing mentorship programs, and supporting you in entrepreneurship.

For more information about The Disability Teacher®, you may reach us through the platforms below:

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Our course, Becoming A Disability Advocate, is offered as a six-week virtual course with weekly live instruction or you may prefer to take our self-paced, automated course. In our course, you will learn:

- How to apply the Social Security Rules to win cases early at the Initial and Reconsideration levels.
- How to attract the right clients for more favorable decisions.
- How to use the Social Security Rules and Regulations to receive the maximum payout for your client and your firm.
- How to complete Social Security Forms.

We also offer EDPNA study sessions in March, April and May for non-attorneys preparing to sit for the EDPNA examination in June.

The Network of American Legal Support Services Professionals - ("The NALSSP")

NALSSP is excited to announce the new NALSSP.COM online directory to the Paralegals Connect community as an Affiliate Partner. Paralegals Connect members can save 30% at initial sign-up on new directory subscriptions through August 31, 2023, by applying the discount code [WELCOMEPARALEGALSCONNECT30].

The directory welcomes U.S. based legal support service professionals and businesses as well as those that support them with relevant products and services [professionals, suppliers, providers, podcasters, merch vendors, influencers, etc]. Wherever professionals are within the legal support services ecosystem, The NALSSP is the place for them!

The NALSSP directory will be a multi-faceted resource for legal support service professionals. It will be a one-stop-shop – serving as an online marketing solution, a place to find colleagues offering other support services and providing business/professional development consulting.

NALSSP.COM is a community of real people being seen by real people. Social media is great. However, many such accounts are administered by social media managers (non-decision makers), AI bots and not actual prospective clients. These accounts may like your posts and your page, yet they have no real connection to anyone that is seeking your services. The NALSSP directory will connect you with clients in real life. Our professionals won't get lost in other overcrowded and spam filled online forums, job boards and groups engaging with irrelevant profiles.

The NALSSP online directory features twelve professional categories all in one place with easy search filtering: Appearance Attorneys, Court Reporters, Forensic Experts, Language Interpreters, Mediators, Medico-Legal, Notary, Paralegals, Private Investigators, Process Servers, Restorative Justice Practitioners and Security Services professionals. Users can search the directory by geographic location, service category, and keyword. Each general category will contain related service professionals. For instance, Legal Nurse Consultants will be listed under "Medico-Legal" and Proofreaders will be listed under "Court Reporter."

Process Servers are always in demand for paralegals. Our Process Server Quote Request feature gives paralegals a simple tool to request bids from multiple process servers in a given local area by zip code - reducing their workload (no need to make multiple calls or send multiple emails). Just fill out one form with all the details of a civil process assignment and submit it. An email will go out to each Process Server under that zip code. Even now, as the directory grows, your quote requests will be received, and you will be provided with multiple options from within the region of your assignment.

NALSSP

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The demand for freelance and remote paralegals is rising. NALSSP.COM provides paralegals with affordable online marketing to prospective clients who are searching for such services. As both the demand and number of freelance paralegals continues to grow exponentially, The NALSSP online directory will be the connecting link. We encourage paralegals to position themselves now by signing up for a new directory listing.

Paralegals can also sign up on our directory as individuals for career advancement. As the directory grows, many other legal support service professionals, potential employers and recruiters will be viewing our site. Our professionals can showcase themselves in a clean and well-presented online profile.

The NALSSP online directory is currently in the Early Enrollment Period for new professionals. We are marketing NALSSP.COM to a cross-section of professionals throughout the legal community who are prospective subscribers and clients. As they subscribe and create their listings, we intend to be the go-to resource for legal support services nationwide. The growth of the directory will take time. We look forward to seeing the development of The NALSSP community.

In addition to directory listings, subscribers will have access to private social media groups with professionals from among all categories within the directory.

We'd love for you and/or your firm to join the new NALSSP.COM online directory today.

Signing up for a directory listing is self-serve and you manage your own profile. We are available to provide support if you need any help.

We intentionally made it affordable for individuals and businesses of all sizes. A basic listing is only \$50 per year (with one time activation fee). If you get one client from our directory that will likely cover your annual listing costs. Everything else is profit!

www.NALSSP.com

Landing An Interview Without Exact Experience

**By: Tami Riggs,
Director of Outreach and Career Services at
Center for Advanced Legal Studies**



You may have portable skills that you can highlight when applying for any new job, even if it is in a different industry. Skills that you acquire in one position can often be applied and valued in a different position with similar responsibilities. How you interpret your experience, the results, and what was learned in prior roles can help a potential new employer see the value in you as an employee. It is up to you to show that your skills are a match for the advertised opening.

Lacking exact experience is not always viewed as a drawback, and previous experience does not always correlate with new hire success. Entry-level talent and those newly qualified in a profession may have other skills that can be adapted and molded to meet the specified needs of a role. These individuals are more likely to embrace learning new things, embody the work culture, and commit to established practices – which is highly desirable to many hiring managers. While candidates with specific experience are often seen as able to step in and contribute immediately, they may not always have a distinct advantage, especially if they bring outdated approaches, undesirable attitudes, or inefficient habits to the workplace. Beyond academic requirements, when it comes to hiring, many organizations believe a strong personality, ambition, and transferable skills are equally important.

Don't immediately consider a position out of reach if you can parlay baseline experience, education, competencies, and talents to the desired outcomes. Carefully review the job description and candidate profile. If you have comparable time and service in a related position, have the necessary skills to perform the job (or can quickly learn the necessary skills), and have 75-80% of what is desired - APPLY! Remember a job posting is a combination of essential and desired qualifications. Years of relevant experience do not always correlate directly with superior performance. Translate the practical knowledge you do have into clearly defined abilities.

Assess your qualifications and how they might align with the requirements for the position. A hiring manager might not be able to negotiate on some things listed as absolute, such as having a degree or being bi-lingual. However, there could be flexibility on the educational and experience prerequisite if your technical, job-specific skill set, and expertise closely align. For example: If the job announcement states: "Criminal Justice Degree Required" and you have no college - but have worked 10 years as a Deputy Sheriff, the college requirement may be waived. In general, the larger the organization, the more likely it is to have rigid processes for evaluating applications. There is always a chance that your application may get rejected with automated filtering associated with some job portals. But, on a manual review of your resume, a hiring manager may give you an interview opportunity.

When measuring the gap between what is listed as a must-have and a nice-to-have focus on your transferrable skills and how you can contribute. Show how your background and work history connect to the position and then pitch toward the strengths and attributes that demonstrate you can do the job, handle the responsibilities, and contribute to the organization.

Identify what crucial soft and hard skills are required. Hard skills are usually industry specific and include abilities acquired or enhanced through training, education, or experience. Soft skills are not technical in nature. These behaviors are learned, developed, and practiced in many professional settings and interactions. It is always appropriate to bullet hard and soft skills in the Skills Section of a resume. To make them relevant and impactful, consider expanding on these skills in the job duties of the Employment Section narrative. This is a place to underpin all competencies with details that will further illustrate how you managed your previous roles and workload.

Many soft skills are also transferable across industries. Consider the following:

Highly desired hard skills that are transferrable across professions include:

1. a solid grasp of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and the ability to produce polished materials e.g., email correspondence, documents, reports, and presentations
2. typing and computer proficiency
3. fluency in more than one language
4. case management and filing
5. data collection, data analysis, and database management
6. knowledge of sales, customer service, and advertising
7. payment processing and billing
8. the ability to coordinate work processes or the work of others
9. scheduling, planning, forecasting, budgeting, and finance
10. hiring, training, and office administration

- Did you take the initiative to pursue new tasks, contribute ideas, or produce error-free, high-quality work? - This can be used to demonstrate commitment, self-motivation, and goal setting.
- Did any of your positions involve working with other people or diffusing difficult situations? This can be used to demonstrate collaboration, teamwork, conflict resolution, and your ability to build relationships with clients and colleagues.
- Did you ask questions or give input to move tasks or assignments forward? This can be used to demonstrate communication and collaboration.
- Did any prior roles require you to analyze situations, predict possible outcomes, come up with solutions, or take actions within an efficient time frame? This can be used to demonstrate problem-solving, critical thinking, and responsiveness.
- Did you come to work on time, meet deadlines and goals, and follow instructions? This can be used to demonstrate punctuality, dependability, time management, and prioritization.

To land an interview without exact experience you must be able to connect the dots between your specific skills and work history and the qualifications needed to perform in the job advertised. If you have excelled in roles with similar responsibilities and hiring managers can see that you will be able to support their goals and execute the required duties, it will increase your chances of getting a call.

Center for Advanced Legal Studies is dedicated to supporting its students before, during, and after their enrollment. Every paralegal student preparing to graduate, who is in good standing, is provided with career services and job search assistance opportunities in traditional and non-traditional markets. Contact us today at www.paralegal.edu to learn more about our programs and upcoming class start dates.



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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 You Need a Career Coach? Top 4 Reasons Legal Professionals Hire Career Coaches

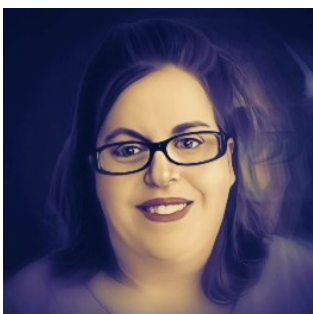
By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC,
CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC A Paralegals Connect Affiliate Partner Article

Career coaches provide a wide range of services, from helping you figure out what you want to do with your career to exploring distinct roles and opportunities for professional growth to supporting you during burnout, job searching, and other times of career transitions. Engaging with a career coach requires time and money, so you must commit to your goals early on.

Here are the top 4 reasons you might hire a career coach.

1. If you are unsure how to write a one-page resume. Resumes in the US are one page. Anything longer than one page is a curriculum vitae (CV). People outside the career guidance industry mistakenly use the words resume and CV as synonyms for each other. If you struggle with writing a targeted one-page resume for the roles you are applying for, this is a strong sign you could benefit from the services of a career coach.
2. Coaches can also help you deal with toxic workplaces. Legal professionals often think their next role will magically remove all negativity. This isn't always true. People exposed to toxic workplaces continue to suffer residual effects.
3. A career coach like Best Virtual Paralegal can help you negotiate more money, and better benefits, and understand job descriptions.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP, is an award-winning paralegal, legal support expert, certified coach, educator, and founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC. She joined the Paralegals Connect's Affiliate Program in 2020 and is a valued Affiliate Partner. | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

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The purpose of career coaching is to help clients manage their career, life, learning, and interpersonal skills journeys by providing advice and support.

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4. Career Coaches can also help you address burn out. Addressing burnout with the help of a career coach is a process that only works if you are willing to have open and honest conversations with the coach. Career coaching for burnout starts by uncovering the root cause of your burnout and then developing a result driven action plan to commit to taking action to overcome your burnout.

Developing a career plan is essential to elevating your career. When developing a career plan, speaking with a financial or tax adviser is imperative. Career-enhancing services, including ongoing education and coaching, are reasonable tax deductions. As a Paralegals Connect Affiliate Partner, the certified coaches with the Best Virtual Paralegal Team are committed to offering affordable support solutions for you. To reach out to the Best Virtual Paralegal Team visit <https://lnk.bio/Bvparalegal> and explore our scheduling options, articles, resources, and sites.

The cost for career coaching can vary by services and coach. The career coaching services offered to Paralegals Connect Members and readers by the Best Virtual Paralegal Team are based on your personal situation, budget and needs. Best Virtual Paralegal Team has payment options and finance options available for legal professionals serious about advancing their career with the help of a coach. To take advantage of financing options an application and credit check may be required.

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Best Practices for Writing Effectively

By: Jackie Van Dyke
aka The Paralegal Writer™



When a supervisor or associate in your firm asks for a document or email to be drafted, the first thing you want to understand is the topic. Are you writing a legal memorandum to help determine whether a case should be pursued? Are you assisting in establishing the foundation for preliminary motions or preparing briefs to be filed with the court at a later date? These guidelines require strong legal writing skills.

On the other hand, are you drafting a more casual email to a client, reminding them of an upcoming hearing date? This type of correspondence is quite straightforward. Before you begin writing the first sentence, know the purpose and your audience. Knowing what is expected from the very beginning of the task will help to hone attention to the details that really matter.

A memorandum must be organized so that the content is easy for the reader to digest, whether that be the attorney, the client, or the judge. Identify the legal issue(s) and clarify each component that is involved in the case. You always want to **START STRONG and END STRONG.**

For example, the first sentence of each paragraph should include a clear topic related to the legal issue and not include boilerplate language. The last sentence of the paragraph should end with a conclusive sentence that is based on the preceding content. Use transitions to help the content flow.

Another important thing to remember when writing is that one must always strive to strike a balance between being thorough and concise. Time is money. Attorneys do not like surprises. Avoid manipulating the facts or eliminating a case that may stand contrary to one's position. When writing to a client, provide options. Allow the client to make the choice.

Finally, always find time to edit and proofread. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling matter. Editing and proofreading are two tasks that ultimately save you time and credibility!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of The Paralegal Writer™, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at George Washington University and a Legal Research and Writing Professor at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

Do You Need to Request Records?

By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC
A Paralegals Connect Affiliate Partner Article

It's a hassle to request and track records. Let the Best Virtual Paralegal Team manage it for you. To improve productivity, maximize resources, and control expenses, we draft, prepare, fax, and send record and bill requests for law firms in the United States.

As part of its record retrieval services, Best Virtual Paralegals can verify the information when needed, prepare templates for your office based on the records you need and speak with custodians and record keepers as required based on the issues related to the underlying requests. The cost of the record retrieval services depends on your individual needs. You can mix and match services to fit each case. The rest of this article covers a few of the frequently asked questions.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES CAN I ADD TO THE BEST VIRTUAL PARALEGAL DOCUMENT RETRIEVAL SERVICES?

Clients may add any of Best Virtual Paralegal's legal support, consulting, coaching, or educational services to their document retrieval services. The most common addons include, but are not limited to record reviews, summaries, redaction, scanning, chronologizing, full-service text search and editing services including optical character recognition (OCR) conversion.

DOES THE RETRIEVAL SERVICE INCLUDE FOLLOW-UPS?

Yes. The Best Virtual Paralegal document retrieval services include follow-ups, comprehensive record request tracking, access to a full suite of text search and editing tools using optical character recognition (OCR) technology, easily searchable and sharable records with annotation, bookmark, redaction, and highlight capabilities. Records are stored on Best Virtual Paralegal's HIPAA-compliant portal.

Ready to save time and money with document retrieval services? Best Virtual Paralegal LLC is the go-to record retrieval company for legal and insurance professionals.

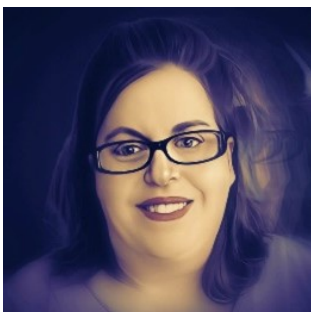
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WHAT TYPES OF RECORDS CAN THE BEST VIRTUAL PARALEGAL TEAM RETRIEVE FOR ME?

Our team can retrieve medical records, financial records, billing records, police reports, crash reports, school records, employment records, court records, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), birth certificates, death certificates, DMV records, and more.

CAN THE BEST VIRTUAL PARALEGAL TEAM RETRIEVE RECORDS OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES?

It depends. If the records can be requested in writing via mail, email, or digital communication, our agents can certainly request the records on your behalf. If the records sought need to be requested or picked up in person, then it depends on the location of the records, and whether Best Virtual Paralegal has an agent in the same geographical location as the records sought.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP is an award-winning paralegal, legal support expert, certified coach, educator, and founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC. She joined the Paralegals Connect's Affiliate Program in 2020 and is a valued Affiliate Partner. | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)



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Virtual / Freelance Paralegals Connect Facebook Group	4,862 Members
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5 Ways Generative AI for Legal Contracts Can Boost CLM Productivity

By: Mark Nastasi
CobbleStone Software



The use of artificial intelligence is all the buzz right now. From Microsoft Bing's use of OpenAI's ChatGPT to Google's Bard AI Chat Bot - the topic of responsible use of artificial intelligence continues to trend. To add to that, generative artificial intelligence (a useful AI technology feature that generates human-like content) is being reviewed extensively - not only from a usability perspective, but from a legal work standpoint.

The realm of legal ops and contract management – traditionally viewed as time-consuming and laborious – is ripe for automation and streamlining with the power of AI. Generative AI for contracts plays a pivotal role – enhancing accuracy and efficiency. Let's explore five ways how.

But first...

How Artificial Intelligence Has Changed *Everything*

Over the past fifty years, society has seen artificial intelligence advanced and adopted in many areas - from predictive analytics (such as weather forecasting) to technology that adjusts to changing surroundings (such as GPS navigation). Now, AI technology can construct what were previously seen as creative assets - such as drawings and written pieces of content.

So how can legal teams get in on the action? The answer is generative AI for contracts – and here are five key ways it is helping transform contract management.

1 – Contract Clause Recommendations

With new natural language processing and deeper contextual understanding of linguistics, generative AI tools can provide clause recommendations that compare existing clauses to not only those in your organization's playbook of legal clauses, but also those from a larger corpus of pre-training and generated clauses.

This contract intelligence process can not only minimize the risk of missing essential clauses, but also saves precious time – enhancing the efficiency of contract drafting and negotiation. Additionally, less experienced members of legal teams can glean valuable information for legal research and understanding the intricacies of different clauses and how they fit into different types of business contracts.

#2 – Generative Clauses

As a waterfall benefit to clause recommendation (see above), I rank generative clauses next.

Beyond simply recommending clauses, generative contract AI can summarize or augment clauses on an automated basis. With vast databases of categorized clauses and improvements with generative technologies, modern AI-powered tools can generate clauses in a matter of seconds. As a bonus, tools that can set (or select) sentiment for specific words or phrases in clauses with favorable (or less) terms can add additional value.

This functionality can reduce the need for manual contract drafting while reducing the risk of human error – virtually ensuring accuracy for every contract.

#3 – Contract Auto-Redlining

To build upon items 1 and 2 above, generative AI can significantly streamline contract redlining. AI can auto-redline legal contract documents (such as MS Word documents, Google Docs, or documents stored within contract management software) and quickly change clause text for favorable contract language. This technology can not only review a draft and redline a contract – but can also locate clauses, match clause-based context to a clause category, and compare clauses to those in a configured and optimized legal library (which is specific to a legal team's needs and pre-trained such that it functions as a legal team's playbook) or those autogenerated from a legal intelligence system.

This functionality can help ensure that each contract aligns with established legal parameters – enhancing the accuracy and compliance of every agreement. Not only can legal teams streamline contract review processes, but they can also free themselves up for more strategic tasks.

#4 – Contract Pattern Recognition

Pattern recognition is an area of generative artificial intelligence that takes the text of a document, extracts many elements into useful contract data points, and uses historical data and predictive analytics to make recommendations as an assistive legal technology.

A good example of how this functionality works might be as follows. Typically – for specific contract types - payment terms are a net 60 days. The legal assistive AI recognizes that, for a specific contract, the terms are net 90 days. The system would then show assistive alerts to bring this discrepancy to the attention of a legal team.

#5 – Contract Auto-Drafting

Contract auto-draft is an area that combines many of the items listed above – complete with specified rules to detect data and trigger entire contracts, amendments, and more.

By integrating clause recommendations, generative clauses, auto redlining, and pattern recognition, generative AI can draft comprehensive contracts that fulfill legal requirements, cater to the specificities of a business relationship, and minimize risk.

Contract auto-drafting not only improves CLM efficiency, but also enhances the quality of contracts – virtually ensuring that they are thorough, compliant, and optimized. As such, legal teams can shift their focus to contract analytics and future-minded insights.

Key Takeaway for Generative Contract AI

It is impressive how legal technology is growing and becoming adaptive very quickly. The above points are to be taken as testaments to assistive technologies that empower legal workers to do their best work – rather than replace the deep thought and human understanding that powers legal operations' success.

If your legal team and/or legal practice is interested in learning more about how you can leverage these and other legal artificial intelligence tools, book a free demo of CobbleStone Contract Insight® CLM software demo at CobbleStoneSoftware.com/Demo.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mark Nastasi is the Executive VP and founder of CobbleStone Software with over 20 years of professional experience in the industry. He launched the first commercial contract software in 1995 named CMTS (Contract Management Tracking System). He has worked extensively with general counsels, paralegals, lawyers, and legal professionals to help manage contracts better. You can reach Mark by email at mnastasi@cobblestonesoftware.com



Five Essential Things Law Offices Must Know About Deep- Dive Asset Searches (Including Crypto!)

By: Josh Chandler,
CEO of Justice Solutions Group



JUSTICE SOLUTIONS GROUP

Deep-dive asset searches have become an indispensable part of legal processes, from litigation to due diligence and from divorce proceedings to judgment enforcement. The advent of digital currencies like Bitcoin has added a new dimension to these searches. Here are the top five aspects law offices need to know about conducting comprehensive asset searches.

1. Comprehensive Approach: Asset searches are no longer limited to physical or tangible property; they also encompass full bank and brokerage searches and digital asset searches such as cryptocurrency holdings. This requires a comprehensive approach that includes tracing traditional assets like real estate and bank accounts, but also USD brokerages (stocks, bonds, and 401K's) and digital assets like Bitcoin and Ethereum. JSG employs a comprehensive strategy in their investigations, applying specialized access to US financial networks, unique proprietary software for cryptocurrencies. Sometimes you do need to do some additional "on the ground" searches, as it pertains to companies with significant equipment holdings, like manufacturing plants or companies with fleets of vehicles, boats, or other heavy equipment like tractors, loaders, etc. In that scenario, having a team of agents that can get on the ground anywhere in the world and get accurate real-time documentation (photo and video) can prove immensely helpful.

2. Legal Compliance and Bank Network Access: There's a thin line between an effective asset search and invasion of privacy, with the latter having legal repercussions. Law firms should engage an investigations firm that understands the legal landscape and abides by federal and state laws. JSG's team prioritizes legal compliance in all investigations, and only conducts asset searches that meet a specific test. Certified judgments are covered by the fact that they are judgments, and most pre-judgment searches and many pre-litigation matters are covered under this test, as subjects may be considered "high risk" for fraudulent behavior based on previous history. In family law, asset searches are typically covered in either a pre-declaration or post-declaration due diligence, so that either side can be assured there are no missing or "forgotten" accounts by either side. With proprietary access to the national bank networks and blockchains, JSG is capable of conducting thorough, accurate, and legal searches.

3. Cryptocurrency Tracking: With the rise of cryptocurrencies, asset search methodologies must adapt. Digital currencies can be hidden and transferred with greater ease than traditional assets, requiring specific expertise. Not all investigation firms have the knowledge to track these assets. JSG, however, stands at the forefront of this trend, having the ability to incorporate cryptocurrency tracking into our investigations to provide a complete financial picture. Our proprietary "CryptoScan" technology checks all email addresses of a known subject against the Top 50 brokerages to identify whether a profile or an account may exist – from there, a request for the "KYC" (Know Your Customer) information can be sent by law offices in either a civil or criminal proceeding to identify whether an account truly exists.

4. Don't Forget About Collector Cars, Boats, Art, and Trusts: Collector cars, vintage watercraft and artwork represent unique avenues for hiding assets and money laundering, due to their high value and relative mobility. These items can easily change hands and cross borders with limited scrutiny, making them attractive vehicles for illicit financial activities. For instance, an individual may purchase a collector car or a piece of artwork using illegally acquired funds, effectively transforming the illicit money into a legitimate asset. The asset can later be sold, returning "clean" money to the individual. This is why nationwide account searches are so important, as "slush" accounts can be used to move this type of money back and forth – CPA's that are..."less than reputable" have been known to carefully structure accounts to look like legitimate trusts, when they are actually just money laundering schemes – and trusts are not all "Blind". By finding the attorneys who represented the end-client, often they can be compelled to reveal whether or not trusts had been created for the target subject. Additionally, such items can be undervalued or overvalued in transactions to further obscure the trail of money. Given their inherent complexity and the often-private nature of these markets, tracking assets hidden in collector cars or artwork requires the specialized skills and extensive knowledge that firms like Justice Solutions Group bring to the table

5. Confidentiality - Don't Tip Off the Target! Asset searches often involve sensitive information. It is paramount that the investigation firm maintains stringent confidentiality protocols to not tip off the target of the search. JSG has built a reputation for delivering confidential results, ensuring the highest degree of discretion in all their investigations.

The multifaceted, ever-evolving nature of asset searches necessitates the services of a reliable, knowledgeable, and adaptable investigative firm. Justice Solutions Group's expertise in crypto searches, combined with their commitment to legal compliance, diverse professional backgrounds, and utmost respect for confidentiality, makes them the ideal choice for law offices seeking comprehensive and effective asset search solutions. Give us a call today or email us at contact@jsgfirm.com and we'll be happy to send you our price book and schedule a call to discuss your cases.

All our initial consultations on cases are free, and we love to talk to our law office clients about what they do and see if there's anywhere, we can help. We do a lot of different things for a lot of different types of law, so just visit us on our website at jsgfirm.com and send us a message or call us at 800.278.9329 and our receptionist team will set up a consultation for you. You can also get our law office price guide at <https://bit.ly/paralegalsconnect> or by scanning the QR code. We look forward to talking with all the great paralegals here in the Paralegals Connect community!



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NON-ATTORNEY REPRESENTATION: EMPOWERING THE PARALEGAL

By: Saprina Taylor, Esquire

In August I had an opportunity to be a speaker at a NC Legal Assistants Continuing Education Conference. My presentation topic was Ethics which included Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Unauthorized Practice of Law. The ethics topic that generated the most questions during my presentation was unauthorized practice of law because not only did I speak about the ethics rule, but my primary focus was on an exception to this rule. As I am certain you are aware, unauthorized practice of law is defined as practicing law without a law license. However, there are exceptions to that rule. One of the exceptions to the rule of non-attorneys practicing law is non-attorney representation for Social Security Disability. A Social Security non-attorney representative is a professional who represents people who are applying for disability benefits. Pursuant to 20 CFR § 404.1705 (b) any person **who is not an attorney** may be appointed to be a representative in dealings with the Social Security Administration if the person:

1. Is capable of giving valuable help to you in connection with your claim;
2. Is not disqualified or suspended from acting as a representative in dealings with the Social Security Administration;
3. Is not prohibited by any law from acting as a representative; and
4. Is generally known to have a good character and reputation.

The Social Security Act allows non-attorney representatives to represent a claimant at all stages of a case from initial application to hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. Non-attorneys earn fees from the back pay a claimant may receive if the representative wins approval or a favorable decision for the client. Non-attorney representatives are entitled to 25% of the claimant's back pay benefits not to exceed \$7,200.00 which is the same fee amount for attorneys who practice Social Security Disability Law.

If you are thinking that non-attorney representation is only a trend and not becoming a staple in the legal field, then you are incorrect. First, this federal regulation allowing for non-attorney representation before the Social Security Administration has been on the books for decades. Adding more credence to non-attorney representation in this country, you should be aware that some states are shifting towards non-attorney representation in other areas of law as well.



Looking to add innovation to the legal field as well as increase access to justice, most recently the Colorado Supreme Court approved a new civil procedure rule that will let some non-attorneys get licensed via a paraprofessional program to practice law in certain family relations matters. Colorado joins Arizona, Minnesota, Oregon, and Utah which have all issued some form of limited license for non-attorneys to practice law.

The advantages of practicing Social Security Disability law over other areas of law like family law are:

1. The rule allowing non-attorney representation is well established;
2. Social Security Disability is a niche practice area;
3. It is governed by federal law so you can practice in any state;
4. The Administration allows you to work remotely by online video hearings or telephone hearings; and
5. You set your own hearing schedule by providing dates of availability to your regional office.

So, if you are a Freelance, Contract or Self-employed Paralegal and need another stream of income and ready for more professional autonomy, or if you are employed with a law firm but would like additional leverage to negotiate your pay increase or help bring additional business to the firm, consider becoming a Non-Attorney Social Security Disability Representative.

At The Disability Teacher we recognize the level of knowledge and the skillset paralegals possess. Our company was founded with the paralegal in mind. We were founded in November 2020, and held our first cohort in April 2021. Since that time, we have held four cohorts of our foundational course, Becoming A Disability Advocate. Our fifth cohort begins September 6. We will launch our first automated self-paced version of Becoming a Disability Advocate on September 6 as well. In our course students learn:

- ✓ The Two Types of Social Security Disability (SSDI and SSI)
- ✓ How to win Benefits for Your Client – Evaluating Social Security Disability Claims
- ✓ The Best Way to File an Initial Application
- ✓ The Best Way to File a Request for Reconsideration (first appeal)
- ✓ The Best Way to file a Request for Hearing Before an Administrative Law Judge (second appeal)
- ✓ How to Represent Your Client at Hearing
- ✓ How to Start and Build Your Social Security Disability Practice?

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Non-Attorney Social Security Disability Representative, go to our website www.thedisabilityteacher.com to see our course offerings. To purchase our foundational course, Becoming a Disability Advocate (live or automated) use promo code **SSDREP** to save \$250 off the regular course price.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Saprina Taylor has 24 years of experience as a Social Security Disability Attorney. Being an entrepreneur at heart, she founded her law firm, The Law Office of Saprina Brown Taylor, in 2006 practicing in the areas of disability and injury law.

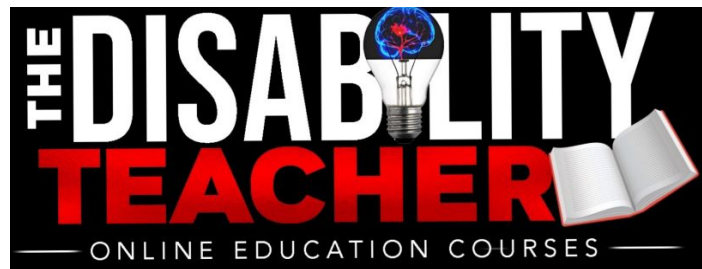
During the COVID 19 pandemic, given the opportunity to slow down and reflect, Saprina founded The Disability Teacher®, LLC. The mission of The Disability Teacher® is to build a community of non-attorney representatives to advocate for people with disabilities before the Social Security Administration. Our motto is Educate, Equip and Empower: EDUCATE students to represent people with disabilities applying for disability benefits from initial application to hearing, EQUIP students with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide zealous representation, and EMPOWER student growth through training, apprenticeship, and mentorship.

For additional information visit us at:

www.thedisabilityteacher.com

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Do You Need Marketing Support?

By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC
A Paralegals Connect Affiliate Partner Article



Marketing, content creation, and branding support are one of the lesser-known services the Best Virtual Paralegal Team offers its ideal clients.

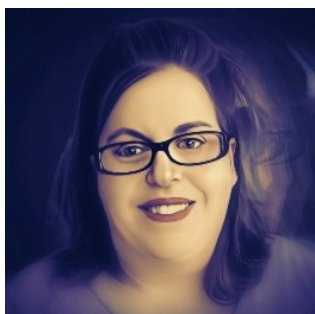
In this article, we will explore some of the frequently asked questions about the marketing services the Best Virtual Paralegal Team offers to legal professionals.

What marketing services does the Best Virtual Paralegal team offer? Our services include video creation, video editing, copywriting, editing, SEO, branding, blog, and content development, logo design, social media management, photography, filming, video content development, CRM setup, marketing automation, and more.

Who can use the Best Virtual Paralegal Marketing services? The Best Virtual Paralegal team assists lawyers, law firms, paralegals, and freelance paralegals in developing, delivering, and managing all their marketing efforts.

Can Best Virtual Paralegal's marketing services help us stay within a budget? Yes. We use the same professional project management tools the larger agencies use; only we charge a fraction of the cost you would expect to pay.

What if I want to learn how to market my freelance paralegal services to attorneys? Can Best Virtual Paralegal help me learn how to pitch my business to gain new clients? Yes, we can show you how to use marketing strategies and tactics for your brand, or we can do it for you. We can develop customized courses for you and your team to learn on the go.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Rev. Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP, is an award-winning paralegal, legal support expert, certified coach, educator, content creator, and founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC. She joined the Paralegals Connect's Affiliate Program in 2020 and is a valued Affiliate Partner. | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

Can the Best Virtual Paralegal Team help me edit and record content for videos? If you need videos edited, we have the software and tools to help. If you are located in the USA, we can help you with photography and video needs on-site too!

Can Best Virtual Paralegal help me design an ebook and magazine cover? Yes! Our team can design and ghostwrite eBooks and magazines for you too! We can help you with all your editorial needs too!

Like this cover? Our Best Virtual Paralegal Team can create, design, or teach you how to do it yourself! (This cover wasn't made with Canva.)



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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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Best Practices for Writing Effectively

By: Jackie Van Dyke
aka **The Paralegal Writer™**



Today's workplace is competitive. Paralegals need a combination of hard and soft skills. Hard skills are those one needs to perform a specific job efficiently such as computer skills. Hard skills can usually be developed through training. Soft skills, on the other hand, can be developed over time and can come naturally, such as leadership or the ability to work under pressure.

The following are considered common hard skills:

- Computer skills
- Data analysis skills
- Information technology skills
- Team management skills
- Presentation skills
- Project management skills

Below is a list of common soft skills:

- Communication skills
- Inter-personal skills
- Leadership skills
- Organizational skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Stress management skills
- Teamwork skills
- Time management skills

Perhaps one of the most important professional skills for a paralegal to develop is good communication. Paralegals must give and receive information all day long; they must understand and be understood by others all day long.

There are four types of communication that paralegals practice throughout their work week: verbal, non-verbal such as facial expressions, written, and visual such as charts or graphs. With experience, one can become a better communicator. Observe good communicators around you.

A great way to work on combining efforts to master a hard skill while focusing on the soft skill of communication is to deliver an effective presentation. Volunteer to be a presenter and ask for constructive criticism. Share your message and interact with the audience. Following each speaking opportunity, identify your strengths and weaknesses.

Before too long, you will feel comfortable with your communication and presentation skills. The next responsibility will be to tackle another skill or two on the professional development list.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of The Paralegal Writer™, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at George Washington University and a Legal Research and Writing Professor at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

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We also want to thank our writers who contributed to this issue
to make our magazine a success!



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