Startup Checklist

1. Sever Your Existing Relationship

- ☐ Advise firm of your decision
- ☐ Advise clients of their rights
- ☐ Wrap up/memo/transfer files
- ☐ Transfer trust funds

2. Satisfy Law Society Requirements

- ☐ Become/remain active
- ☐ Advise re address, form of practice
- ☐ Pay insurance or file exemption
- ☐ File Form U re accounting or exemption

3. Make Deal With Partner(s), Space-Sharer(s)

- ☐ Find people to associate with
- ☐ Negotiate the deal
- ☐ Write up an Agreement

4. Acquire Space

- ☐ Find a location that supports your goals
- ☐ Design the layout
- ☐ Negotiate a lease

5. Acquire Furniture

- ☐ Lawyer/assistant/client areas
- ☐ Reception, meeting room
- ☐ Filing cabinets, safe

6. Acquire Software

- ☐ Basic: word processing, client and file information, calendaring, time/billing/accounting, email, Internet, communication, voice recognition
- ☐ Specialized: (e.g. real estate, wills, litigation support)

7. Acquire Equipment

- ☐ Computers, printer, server, backup, scanner, cost-recovery devices
- ☐ Telephone, FAX
- ☐ Photocopier (with collator, document feeder)
- ☐ Postage scale, meter

8. Acquire Supplies

- ☐ Paper supplies
- ☐ Other supplies

9. Acquire Insurance

- ☐ E&O (basic and excess) through ALIA
- ☐ Public liability/tenants' legal liability
- ☐ Property (all perils)
- ☐ Auto (business use)
- ☐ Business interruption, valuable papers
- ☐ Life, disability

Return to Top

10. Acquire Legal Resources

- ☐ Research resources
- ☐ Precedents
- ☐ LESA Practice Manuals, Bar Ad Resource Materials and Course Materials
- ☐ Texts, reports, digests, periodicals

11. Arrange for Services

- ☐ Courier
- ☐ Process Server
- ☐ Investigator
- ☐ Land Titles and Corporate registry

12. Start Policies and Procedures Manual

13. Develop Paper-Handling Systems

- ☐ File opening procedure (incl. numbering)
- ☐ Filing
- ☐ Mail, FAX and deliveries
- ☐ Phone messages
- ☐ Registry of incoming cheques
- ☐ Registry of incoming/outgoing client documents and property

14. Develop Client and File Info Systems

- ☐ File index or database
- ☐ Client index or database
- ☐ Conflict of interest procedures

15. Develop Time Management Systems

- ☐ Dual calendar for appointments, appearances, etc.
- ☐ File bring-forward system
- ☐ Limitations and deadlines systems
- ☐ Timekeeping
- ☐ Case planning

16. Develop Systems for Legal Procedures

- ☐ Use LESA Practice Manuals

17. Develop Personnel Policies

- ☐ Job Descriptions
- ☐ Salaries and benefits policies
- ☐ Workplace policies
- ☐ Confidentiality policies
- ☐ Hiring (recruiting, interviewing, selecting, negotiating terms)
- ☐ Orienting, training, supervising, evaluating
- ☐ Payroll (Revenue Canada employee number, deductions books, payroll book)

18. Make Banking, Credit Arrangements

- ☐ Open trust and general accounts
- ☐ Interest on trust account letter to bank
- ☐ LOC/bank or family loan/overdraft
- ☐ Office credit cards

19. Make GST Arrangements

- ☐ Register
- ☐ Accounting procedures

Return to Top

20. Develop Bookkeeping, Accounting Procedures

- ☐ Trust accounting procedures
- ☐ General accounting procedures (timekeeping, disbursements, billing procedures and Cycles, accounts receivable, accounts payable, revenue and expenses posting, month-end procedures, payroll)
- ☐ If using a manual system, get Guide to Manual Law Office Bookkeeping

21. Develop Financial Info Systems

- ☐ Aged accounts receivable, aged work-in-progress, monthly cash and credit analysis, monthly budget analysis
- ☐ Accounts receivable follow-up
- ☐ Accounts payable follow-up

22. Establish Pricing Policies

- ☐ Fees
- ☐ Disbursements recovery policies

23. Establish Client Relations Policies

- ☐ Communicating fees and deadlines to clients
- ☐ Engagement, non-engagement and disengagement letters
- ☐ Copies to clients policy
- ☐ Reporting to clients policy
- ☐ Documents appearance policy
- ☐ Phone call return policy

24. Register with Legal Aid, Lawyer Referral

25. Announce your New Practice

- ☐ To existing clients
- ☐ To lawyers and judges
- ☐ To potential clients
- ☐ To the public

26. Start Marketing

- ☐ Open house
- ☐ Yellow pages
- ☐ Signage
- ☐ Advertising

27. Seek Out Law Society Help

- ☐ Practice Advisor
- ☐ Practice Management Advisor
- ☐ Mentors
- ☐ Auditors
- ☐ ASSIST

Return to Top