

DRAFT ARTICLE FOR THE LEEDS & YORKSHIRE LAWYER FEBRUARY 2010 EDITION

GOING IT ALONE? FIND A FRIEND!

I have the privilege of being this year's co-chair of the Yorkshire Sole Practitioners Group ("YSPG"). Sole practitioners ("SPs") are supported by the Law Society and the national Sole Practitioners Group ("SPG") has a website www.spg.uk.com which is a helpful portal to useful information.

There are very many benefits of being your own boss. This article is for those who have recently set up in practice on their own, or are thinking about doing so.

SPG CONFERENCE MAY 2011 IN HARROGATE

I began working as a sole practitioner 3 years ago (specialising in Intellectual Property). I discovered the **Sole Practitioners Conference** last year and I can highly recommend it. It is held in **May** every year and it provides 2 days worth of valuable information on all aspects of managing a sole practitioner's business and also awards 8 CPD points. This year it is taking place in **Harrogate** so I hope to see a big turnout from the region.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL

The YSPG provides invaluable advice from those who have run successful practices as sole practitioners for many years.

The YSPG is a forum for sole practitioners across Yorkshire, offering advice, support and networking. The Group meets regularly to discuss legal and practice management issues of particular relevance to sole practitioners.

The image of sole practitioners has changed a great deal over recent years. Today's sole practitioner is likely to be running a niche practice operating at the cutting edge of both law and technology. With the help of today's information systems a sole practitioner can work with much lower overheads than the big firms and so can be highly competitive. However, there is always the danger of sole practitioners wasting time "re-inventing the wheel". The YSPG can help avoid this by enabling you to tap into a wealth of skills, expertise and knowledge.

POWER IN NUMBERS

I am keen to increase the membership of the YSPG so that we can have a strong and authoritative voice when lobbying on behalf of sole practitioners as well as providing a more supportive network.

There are sole practitioners in many different areas of law. With the advent of fabulous and affordable IT systems, more commercial lawyers are working as sole practitioners than ever before. With the economic downturn hitting law firms hard a number of solicitors have decided to go it alone. For people in this position, having experienced colleagues to turn to can be invaluable.

Some of the disadvantages of working alone can be overcome by membership of networks such as the YSPG. Sharing marketing efforts and the costs of administrative support in the form of “chambers” can also be helpful.

CHAMBERS ANYONE?

Jane Sachedina (company/commercial), Neil Lieberman (insolvency and commercial litigation), Barbara Jacobs (residential property) and Michael Menzies Baird (general litigation) share a chambers in York. Each is a separate and distinct practice but they share office space, equipment and administrative support. Graham Pressler is a sole practitioner specialising in criminal work within an administrative umbrella known as “Parcton Law Chambers” in Scunthorpe.

If you are a sole practitioner specialising in a commercial area of law and interested in setting up or joining a chambers of solicitors in Leeds or part of the Yorkshire and Humber area then please do contact me.

GET IN TOUCH & STAY IN TOUCH

If you are a sole practitioner do get in touch – either to attend the next meeting or simply receive the briefing notes (Meeting dates are posted on the SPG website or you can email me to be added to the circulation list). Meetings are held in a city centre location which changes to allow ease of access for members. Membership currently ranges from the Lincolnshire border up to Scarborough and across to the Lancashire border.

Finally don't forget the Harrogate SPG conference in 2011.

SARA LUDLAM 9 DECEMBER 2010

Saraludlam@ludlams.co.uk