



## Trimble: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You: It's Time To Pay Attention

John Trimble March 11, 2015



**JOHN C. TRIMBLE**  
Lewis Wagner LLP  
2015 IndyBar President  
Follow John on Twitter:  
@indytrims, @indybarpres

In my spare time, I have the pleasure of chairing the Law Practice Management committee of a national bar association. My duties have taken me all over the place to attend seminars, symposia and managing partner forums to learn about the challenges facing our profession. One theme has been constant at every meeting, namely, that rank and file lawyers are not paying attention. They are busy grinding out a living in these tough economic times, and unless a crisis occurs in their practice, they soldier on, oblivious to the tidal wave that is building.

I am not a futurist, and I am not an alarmist, but I have seen and heard enough to realize that change is upon us and it is permanent. Law practice as we know it is changing at all levels and in every practice sector. Eventually, no one will be left unaffected.

The catalysts for change are pretty simple: our clients simply cannot afford us any longer. The poor have never been able to afford us. However, even middle class and upper middle class consumers can no longer afford most legal services. More and more people are going without legal services or they are using online materials to assist them in representing themselves.

In the business world, more and more traditional legal matters are being handled by non-lawyers with some legal training. Corporate law departments are hiring and expanding as businesses learn that the hourly billing for outside lawyers is unpredictable and uncontrolled.

If you are a solo or small practice lawyer, you probably feel you don't have time to stay abreast of change because of the strains of running a small business. If you are in a medium to large firm, you may feel that you can ignore change and let your firm managers do it. You may even feel that you can ignore your managers because of the press of practice.

I ask everyone...please take my word for it, that what you don't know CAN hurt you. It is time to pay attention.

I urge all lawyers to work some time into their busy weeks to read something about our profession. The ABA Law Practice Section has a fabulous monthly magazine in printed and electronic formats that is chock full of valuable information. I read daily blog postings from outstanding contributors such as Attorneys at Work and Solo University. There are many fine law firm consultants who have free

newsletters with timely advice, surveys and trends (I won't name them here, but if you need names, let me know).

The Indiana State Bar Association has a stellar annual seminar for Solo and Small Practice lawyers. Take time to go. The IndyBar also has programming and a section devoted to solo and small practice. We have a task force at work to make sure that we are providing what you need, and we welcome your suggestions for programming.

As we go forward, the lawyers who get out ahead of change will be the ones who succeed and thrive the most. The lawyers who ignore change will stagnate or lose ground. Invest in our profession and your career by paying attention. You won't regret it.

#WILLYOUBETHERE?