

## Health Law Connections

May 2022

# Young Professionals—Using Online Platforms to Supercharge Your Practice

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As a first generation professional and the first lawyer in my family, the prospect of building a professional network was incredibly daunting. I initially began engaging on social media and other online platforms in a professional capacity in hopes of meeting other young professionals in the same industry. It turned out to be one of the best things I ever did for my practice. I have expanded my network more than I could have ever imagined, and it has provided me with opportunities that I would not have found solely through in-person interactions.

Below are some tips and tricks to expand your virtual reach:

### **Employer Policies and Professional Limitations**

Ask whether your employer has rules, policies, or best practices for employees engaging online in a work-adjacent capacity. These policies will likely vary by online platform. Also, if you are a licensed professional, check with your licensing body to see if it has requirements that must inform your online engagement. These may include things like disclaimers that must be included in your posts or profile (e.g., “Attorney Advertising. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome”). If you are licensed in more than one state or have more than one professional license, be sure to familiarize yourself with any rules that might apply to your situation and always adhere to the strictest applicable rules. Trade groups (like your local bar association) may also have helpful manuals and guidelines on which you can model your online activity. Regardless of whether you have employer or licensing limitations, the Golden Rule always applies, treat others online as you would like to be treated: avoid conflicts, mean-spirited comments, and gossip on your timeline. Most importantly, always be mindful to protect confidential information and your client’s best interests.

### **Pick Your Platform**

Consider how you want to engage with online platforms: do you want to contribute content, meet others in the industry, or consume content to learn more about an area of interest? How you approach a platform should be informed by your personality, the time you want to devote to this type of outreach, and what you are hoping to get in return.

I primarily use Twitter (@aledalton). I like that it is a space to meet other professionals and contribute to conversations, but also because it is a great (and underutilized!) place to learn about breaking news affecting our industry. Did you know that CMS (@CMSGov), the Administrator for CMS (@BrooksLaSureCMS), the Office of Inspector General (@OIGatHHS), the Joint Commission (@TJCommission), Medicaid (@MedicaidGov), and countless other significant players in our field are all active on Twitter? The more you tailor your newsfeed by

following industry accounts and other #AHLA members, the more your newsfeed becomes a well-curated list of the most recent industry updates alongside insightful commentary from health care professionals.

While Twitter is not for everyone, every platform has its gems. YouTube provides great practical training to young corporate attorneys. For example, Brett Cenkus's channel, "The Right-Brained Business Lawyer." Cenkus is a deal lawyer who publishes videos on topics like "Structuring M&A Deals for Buyers and Sellers" and "Debt in a Business Sale or Acquisition." There are also countless law firm associates on TikTok who share tips and tricks to leverage time in the office and manage a busy schedule.

Consider what online platform will help you move toward your goals. Maybe it would be helpful to have more contacts in a particular health law specialty or to connect with medical providers in a certain service line; following certain specialists on Twitter who discuss clinical practices has proven helpful to me in understanding clinical trials that have crossed my desk. Let your needs shape your engagement and content creation efforts. There is a space for everyone!

### **Networking Internally**

Are you part of a large organization? Did you start your role at the height of the pandemic when offices were empty? Consider connecting with your colleagues online. This might be through internal channels or through spaces like LinkedIn. There is so much you can learn about your organization and colleagues, including interesting matters and cases they are currently or have recently worked on, which can open up an additional workstream for you. It is also a fantastic way for folks in your organization to get to know you, celebrate your wins, keep up with articles you have published, and generally follow your career. You will find that people love cheering their organization's young professionals. I have found an incredible network of mentors within my firm who are located across our footprint simply by reaching out and staying in touch through LinkedIn.

### **Non-Social Media Online Platforms**

Social media is not the only place to meet like-minded professionals. Consider joining online platforms that overlap with your hobbies. I really enjoy riding my Peloton (you can find me on the leaderboard at #LegallyDogMom) and during the pandemic, it quickly became a fun, socially-distanced way to "network" and "catch up" with others. Instead of going out for coffee or lunch, I would take a ride with colleagues and online friends. Even with the world opening up again, we still ride together on a regular basis. There are so many online groups that connect professionals who not only share industries but also hobbies and outside-the-office pursuits, whether it's the #PeloLawMoms group, (one of the most well-connected groups out there!), knitting (#knittingtwitter), or fly-fishing (#flyfishinglessons compiles lessons that litigators can learn from the art of fly-fishing), consider pursuing your hobbies and interests alongside others in your industry. Genuine connections can form in the most unexpected places.

Ultimately, the gains you make from online engagement will reflect your enjoyment of these interactions, so do something that sounds fun to you. While not everyone wants to be a viral hit on TikTok, consider whether there are online spaces that can help you become a happier, friendlier, more well-informed, and more well-connected health law professional!

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**Alé Dalton** assists clients in the health care industry with a wide range of transactional, operational, and regulatory matters. Her practice focuses on providing counsel during mergers and acquisitions, as well as guiding clients

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through issues that arise from the complex nature of operating in a highly regulated industry. She has experience handling acquisitions, divestitures, and joint ventures involving hospitals, physician practices, ambulatory surgery centers, and other providers. Alé also advises clients in matters involving clinical research and telemedicine.