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For Solo Attorneys: Which Webinar and How to Be a Speaker

What are the criteria solo attorneys use to decide which webinars to view or to lead? How might you secure invitations to speak on a webinar and also promote the event? Following the session, how may you share what you have spoken about or learned?

By **Janet Falk** | March 27, 2020 at 12:00 PM



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Webinars and podcasts are all the rage, delivering timely information to busy attorneys (and clients), regardless of their physical location—particularly during these days of coronavirus and “social distancing.” Attorneys recognize the value of speaking to audiences via an online platform and listening to such broadcasts. You receive up to date information about the profession and your practice area. As a speaker, you promote your knowledge and practice. Speakers and attendees may earn CLE.

What are the criteria solo attorneys use to decide which webinars to view or to lead? How might you secure invitations to speak on a webinar and also promote the event? Following the session, how may you share what you have spoken about or learned?

Most attorneys gravitate to webinars that are in their practice area. William Denver, of [The Denver Law Firm](#) in Red Bank, with a practice in litigation and insurance recovery, states, “I look for webinars sponsored by the state bar and those dealing with litigation and insurance issues which interest me.”

Alan Peyrouton, with a criminal defense practice at [Peyrouton Law](#) in Hackensack, says, “As long as the CLE webinar is accredited, I focus on the subject matter and the experience of the presenter.”

For some attorneys, webinars are an opportunity to dip a toe in new waters and explore a different practice area. Marnita Robertson, of [Robertson Law](#), with a practice focused on data privacy and technology transactions in Fort Lee, takes this view. “I think it is also worthwhile to attend a webinar that may not be totally related to your practice area, but that you may have a general interest in learning more about. It could result in developing an interest in an entirely new and exciting practice area.”

The business aspects of managing a solo practice are also engaging topics. For Melanie Cunningham, “As a relatively new solo practitioner, I often register for webinars that deal with the business of law, i.e., practical practice management tips, marketing, accounting/financial tips.” Her virtual practice, focused on business law, intellectual property and estate planning, is [Melanie Cunningham Law Office](#).

Not surprisingly, *time of day* may be a factor for attorneys who want to participate in a live session. Ayesha Hamilton, whose practice of business and employment law at [Hamilton Law Firm](#) is based in West Windsor, remarks, “It helps when these webinars take place over lunch hour, as it is easier to make time for viewing in the office.”

On the other hand, recorded sessions allow time-starved attorneys to dedicate themselves to speaking with clients, and still keep current. This flexibility appeals to Judie Saunders, with a practice of civil and criminal litigation at [The Law Offices of Judie Saunders](#) with offices in Red Bank and New York City. “Webinars allow me to view important topics on *my* schedule. I also listen to webinars when I travel, which adds opportunities for my practice to be more efficient.”

When it comes to leading a webinar on a topic in one’s area of practice, it’s important to first know your purpose in giving a program. According to Marc Garfinkle, with a practice in ethics and disciplinary matters at [Law Office of Marc Garfinkle](#) based in Morristown, key questions are “Do you want to become known among colleagues? Do you want to educate them?” With that perspective in mind, find a venue that will host the webinar.

Some solo attorneys find the shortest route to leading a webinar is through membership in a bar association. Kim Yonta notes, “The New Jersey State Bar Association Institute for Continuing Legal Education (ICLE) is always looking for new topics and areas of practice for a webinar. You can always reach out to the staff at ICLE and let them know that you have a special topic for a webinar.” She practices criminal defense at [Yonta Law](#) in New Brunswick.

Garfinkle adds, “If you want to go national with Lawline, West LegalEdcenter, Practising Law Institute or Lorman, check out their formats and see how they feel. Then conceive a program, come up with an appealing title and it can fly. They are hungry for good content.”

If you want to stay more local, Yonta points out that “Many county bar associations are linking up their systems for webinars. Recently, the Middlesex County Bar Association installed a new electronic platform in its meeting room that will allow its members to participate in CLE or webinars from the comfort of the attendee’s office.”

Consider offering a webinar for potential clients who are consumers. Denver created a webinar “for policyholders facing claims for damages due to Hurricane Sandy. We coordinated with a publication, brought in insurance brokers and public adjusters and shared it with our clients. Written materials were sent to clients and an insurance industry publication sponsored and promoted the webinar.”

Speaking of promotion, many attorneys actively drive attendance to the webinar. When Hamilton speaks on a program sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Association, “they promote the event and I share it on my social media, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.”

In addition, matrimonial attorney Leona Krasner “created several posts for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and focused each post on a different aspect of the upcoming webinar” about implicit bias in the workforce. [Krasner Law](#) is based in Jersey City and New York City.

Robertson recommends personal contact. “Pick up the phone and have a chat about an upcoming webinar with someone who has a significant network. This adds a personal touch and gives you an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with your contact through personal interaction.”

Whether you attended a webinar or presented one, this timely information is likely to be of interest to clients and colleagues. Peyrouton states, “Immediately after each webinar, I write down the top three points or *takeaways* and I email my colleagues to share the new information. Often, these takeaways serve as talking points over coffee or lunch.”

Cunningham agrees. “If there are any takeaways that I can immediately implement in my practice to better serve my clients, I do. Occasionally it makes sense to directly say to a client that I am making a change based on something I recently learned.”

For the webinar on insurance for consumers, Denver said, “I shared a follow up email and the firm promoted it through social media.”

Likewise, Krasner planned subsequent outreach after her program. “I created a post about the implicit bias in the workforce webinar, including the title, photos of the literature, and a statement summarizing the content.”

Webinars are valuable for solo attorneys, but the online platform limits interaction; Yonta notes the plusses and minuses, as a speaker. “The advantages for an attendee are that you can stay at your desk in your office or in your home in the evening, so you do not have to travel to the location. However, it is difficult for a speaker who cannot see the audience. I like to know whether my audience is engaged and base my information on the questions and concerns that my audience voices at a seminar. In a webinar, it is more difficult to do, because the audience is not as engaged as they are in person.”

Finally, Saunders offers a perspective on the selection of webinar speakers. “A more intentional and balanced effort should be made by CLE providers to seek out and promote industry webinars that are moderated by women and people of color. A wider, more interesting discussion would take place with a variety of voices at the table.”

Given the diversity of attorneys weighing in on the topic of webinars, and the noted opportunity to nominate oneself as a webinar speaker through both bar associations and private providers, attorneys with a solo practice, who are women and people of color, are encouraged to follow Saunders’ suggestion, as are the CLE providers themselves.

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Reporters Call Without Losing Your License was rated **the most popular Lawline CLE in New Jersey** (Feb. 14, 2019).

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