

Spotlight on Our Members

This issue kicks off a new section where we will spotlight our fellow members who do interesting activities outside of standard or usual legal practice. Today we spotlight three members who are business owners...



PHOTO SOURCE: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE



MISTY GANN, PROMPT CHEMICAL SCREENING
How did you get started as a business owner?

I like to joke that I am a chronic entrepreneur.

My husband and I launched a landscape company in 1991. In 1997, I was able to leave my job to run that full-time. I hired an office manager for the landscape business, and started a career as a realtor.

During my realtor career, my husband and I found ourselves trying to obtain custody of two family members whose parents had become addicted to methamphetamine and this is when I would start a new business adventure as a drug screener.

I was perplexed at how known drug users could repeatedly pass their drug screens. In 2007, I launched Prompt Chemical Screening and provided drug screening services to Cobb County Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) and eventually added other counties to our client list. It is my work with DFCS that led

me to law school. As I testified in juvenile court about the drug screens Prompt Chemical had administered, I witnessed the lack of focus on the children's best interests in the proceedings. I decided to go to law school and do my part in looking out for the best interests of children.

Do you currently practice law full-time? Part-time? Not at all?

My intention was to practice part-time but like everything else in my life, I commit to too much and find myself working full-time. It took me a week to write my first motion! I have come a long way in the past

two years, but to keep up with my cases, bookkeeping, etc., I often find myself in the office six days a week. Fortunately, my husband is a workaholic too, so this works for our family.

Does your legal training and experience impact your role as a business owner?

Absolutely. You would not believe the revisions I have made to our disclaimers, releases, and other documents. We also treat subpoenas much differently now at Prompt. As a family law attorney, I often have cases involving drug use. I must include in every order that the parties may not seek testing at Prompt Chemical to avoid inadvertent conflicts.

How has your business been impacted by the pandemic?

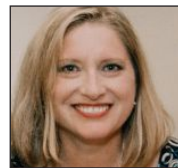
Learning to be a new attorney, especially a solo one, during a pandemic has certainly been challenging. I opened Misty Gann Law LLC in November 2019 just before the pandemic. Then, March 2020 and COVID-19 came, and I decided I needed office space where I could go and not have contact with others. So, I moved my office to Hiram, GA. Now, my law office is only three doors away from my other business. This has been a good change and fortunately, I still found generous attorneys to guide and train me. **JoAnna Smith** (Georgia Family Law Project) has been invaluable to me, and I could not ever do enough to repay her for her guidance.

How can Atlanta Bar members support your business?

The better question is how we can support their businesses. We offer paternity testing and drug screening service on-site all over Metro Atlanta. We are at the courthouse, law office, hospital, or wherever else you need client testing. We have met workers comp attorneys in emergency rooms at 2 a.m. and we have been waiting outside a courtroom door to get the elusive parent for a drug screen. When Atlanta Bar members have drug screen, paternity test, or fidelity testing needs, they should reach out to Prompt Chemical for support.

What advice might you have for other Bar members who are considering starting a side business?

Hire a good accountant, because bookkeeping is a time suck!



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How did you get started as a business owner?

I first became interested in the role medical professionals could play in the legal field after my auto insurance company was sued following a car accident in which I was found to be at fault. The plaintiff alleged that because of being rear-ended he was on pain medications chronically which caused him to develop diabetes and become blind. As a registered nurse, I knew that blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy cannot develop over the course of just a few years but is a complication that develops after several years of poorly controlled diabetes. The case was settled by the insurance company before ever going to court for several million dollars. From that point on I have been interested in the difference medical professionals could make in legal proceedings.

Do you currently practice law full-time? Part-time? Not at all?

I currently practice full-time as a legal nurse consultant with most of my experience being in personal injury, product liability, criminal law, and workers comp.

As a nurse I have participated in the direct patient care of patients suffering from a

wide variety of injuries, and I have worked with patients from newborn through geriatric populations.

Does your legal training and experience impact your role as a business owner?

Training from the legal nurse consultant post-graduate program at Kennesaw State University built upon my skills related to creative problem solving and critical analysis, which had previously been developed during my career and training as a Master's-educated nurse. I apply these skills to my attorney-client's cases by analyzing medical records for discrepancies, helping find expert witnesses to support my attorney-client's cases, and providing education about the medical record to make it easier for the attorney to be able to tell their client's story.

How has your business been impacted by the pandemic?

The pandemic impacted my business in a huge way due to a loss of marketing opportunities. Many attorneys are still unsure about what legal nurses really do or how a legal nurse can support their case. The best way to overcome these obstacles is to meet with attorneys in person through networking events such as local and state bar association meetings and during the pandemic those events were all put on hold. In order to meet new clients, I designed a CLE course, which I offer in a virtual lunch-and-learn format, and I am starting to also focus on creating content attorneys will find valuable which I share through the blog on my website.

Any interesting surprises as a business owner?

The degree to which marketing strategies change and adapt was a huge surprise to me. You can have a plan for how you are going to reach your target audience, but it is almost never going to be the first thing you try that is successful. That's what makes being a business owner fun and challenging.

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