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Conflict Case List

The [CBA Task Force on Conflicts of Interest](#) has issued an April 2010 [update on Canadian conflicts cases](#). The most recent cases have focused on disqualifications and waivers and the update examines the courts' evolving approach to these two issues. The Task Force is also developing an engagement letter precedent that can be customized to different areas of law and practice situations. You can offer feedback on its development at the [online survey on engagement letters](#).

Fraud Update

Fraud complaints continue to increase and the schemes are getting more sophisticated according to practicePRO director Dan Pinnington in his article [Please Deposit My Bogus Cheque So I Can Give The Money To An Orphanage](#), posted March 31 on the Avoid a Claim blog. To help lawyers recognize the new red flags of problem deals he highlights the tactical changes fraudsters have made and reviews the lessons to be learned from a recent Ontario fraud attempt. The bottom line: if things don't add up, be suspicious and don't be bullied into making a hasty payment. See the article for links to free fraud prevention resources.

How Law Firms Can Make the Most of Social Media

Social media and blogs are the most rapidly expanding category in overall marketing budgets, generating real customers at low cost, according to Hubspot's February 2010 report on [The State of Inbound Marketing](#). Although millions of individual lawyers have LinkedIn or Facebook accounts, law firms have been slower to embrace the technology and most are not using it effectively. In several recent posts on Stem Legal's [Law Firm Web Strategy blog](#), Jordan Furlong examines how law firms can make the best use of social networking tools like Twitter

and Facebook. To illustrate his points he links to good and bad examples of law firm social media use. A couple of surprising observations are that small niche firms are more effective users than large firms with bigger budgets; and that Facebook is a better way to advance a firm profile and engage clients than the more widely accepted business platform LinkedIn. For more detail take a look at these three articles: [Facebook for law firms](#), [Twitter for law firms](#), and [LinkedIn for law firms](#).

And, for individual lawyers wanting to enhance their LinkedIn profiles, the *National* magazine article [What kind of LinkedIn lawyer are you?](#) contains some useful pointers.

Planning Your Future

Retirement rates are predicted to rise exponentially as boomers age and the recession eases, making succession planning critical for both retiring lawyers and their firms. These discussions can be hard to initiate, but should be undertaken early to allow for an orderly transition. [Succession Planning](#), the March 2010 issue of *Law Practice Today*, deals with all aspects of the topic, from grooming successors to handling digital assets. Even if retirement seems like a far off dream, reading the checklist in the article [Exit. Stage Left!](#) will illustrate why starting early is key.

Diversity Strategies

It's widely accepted that having a diverse workforce is good for business, but most law firms are not meeting their diversity goals. To find out why and to learn what strategies will work to help advance inclusion efforts read the April issue of *Law Practice Today*, [Effective Diversity Strategies in Law Practice Management](#). Although the magazine is aimed at American lawyers, the concepts apply to all businesses. The article [Inclusion Strategies to Eliminate Bias in the Legal Profession](#), by Susan Letterman White, is particularly helpful.

Smartphone Applications for Lawyers

The exponential growth in smartphone applications makes it hard for even the most tech savvy among us to stay current. If you just want to know which applications will make your lawyer life easier (time trackers, legal reference sources, task managers, email, etc.) take a look at these recent articles:

- [Top 10 i Phone apps for legal practitioners](#) and [Top 10 BlackBerry apps for legal practitioners](#), both by Rose Wilson, from March and April/May 2010 *National* magazine;
- [Apps for the Lawyer's BlackBerry](#), by Toby Brown and Dan Pinnington;
- [Apps for the Lawyer's iPhone](#), by Jeff Richardson;
- [Apps for the Lawyer's Palm Pre](#), by Erik Mazzone and Nerino J. Petro.

Small Firm Professional Development Programs

The 5th Annual Solo and Small Firm Conference and Expo will take place in Toronto on May 14, 2010. The conference focuses on new technology and increasing efficiency. Those unable to attend the conference can participate by live webcast and recorded sessions. For further details see the [conference brochure](#) and [registration form](#).

The CBA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Conference and the Legal Profession Assistance Conference are presenting an online webconference on [Establishing, Building and Growing Your Firm](#) on June 2, 2010. [Register online](#) to participate.

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