



presented by  
Student Services  
Committee  
of the  
Nebraska Paralegal  
Association

# The Workflow Series

A Series of Hands-On Workshops  
to Educate, Explore and Enhance  
Productivity of Paralegals

Presented to:  
Doane College  
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Student Services  
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## Getting the Basics:

1. Interviewing for the Job
  - Ethics in the Interview
2. The Client Interview
  - Ethics in the Client Interview
3. Ethics in the Office
  - Scenarios
4. Office Etiquette
5. Ethics in Cyberspace

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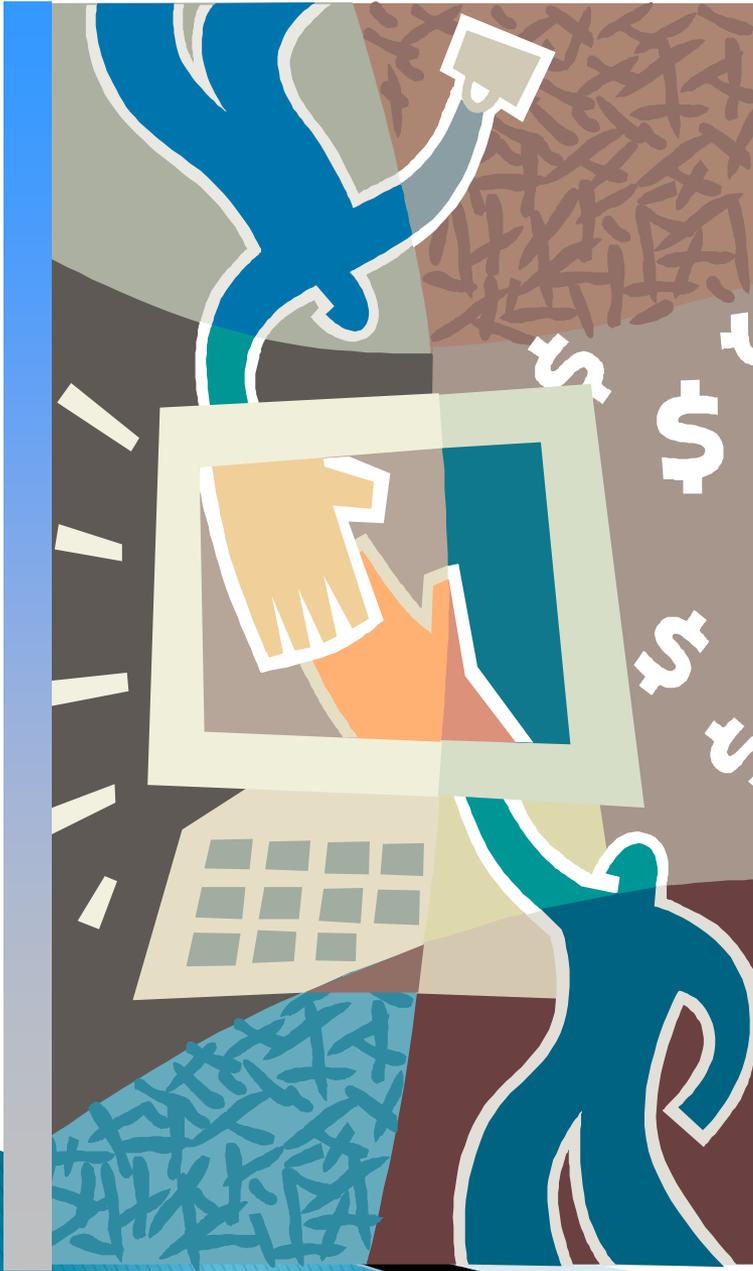
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# Interviewing for the Job



Here's how a first impression works, according to a study from former UCLA professor Albert Mehrabian:

“First impressions are formed in 7 seconds.

**38%** of a first impression is based on inflection and tone of voice (how you say things);

**7%** is based on what you actually say, and

a whopping **55% of a first impression comes from NON-VERBAL cues!**

In short, more than half of every first impression is based on how you look!”



- Ladies - wear a suit (dress slacks or a skirt).
- Men – suit and tie.
- If you are called back for a second interview, business dress again.
- Jacket and dress slacks or skirt for the Ladies.
- Sports jacket, slacks and tie for the Men.



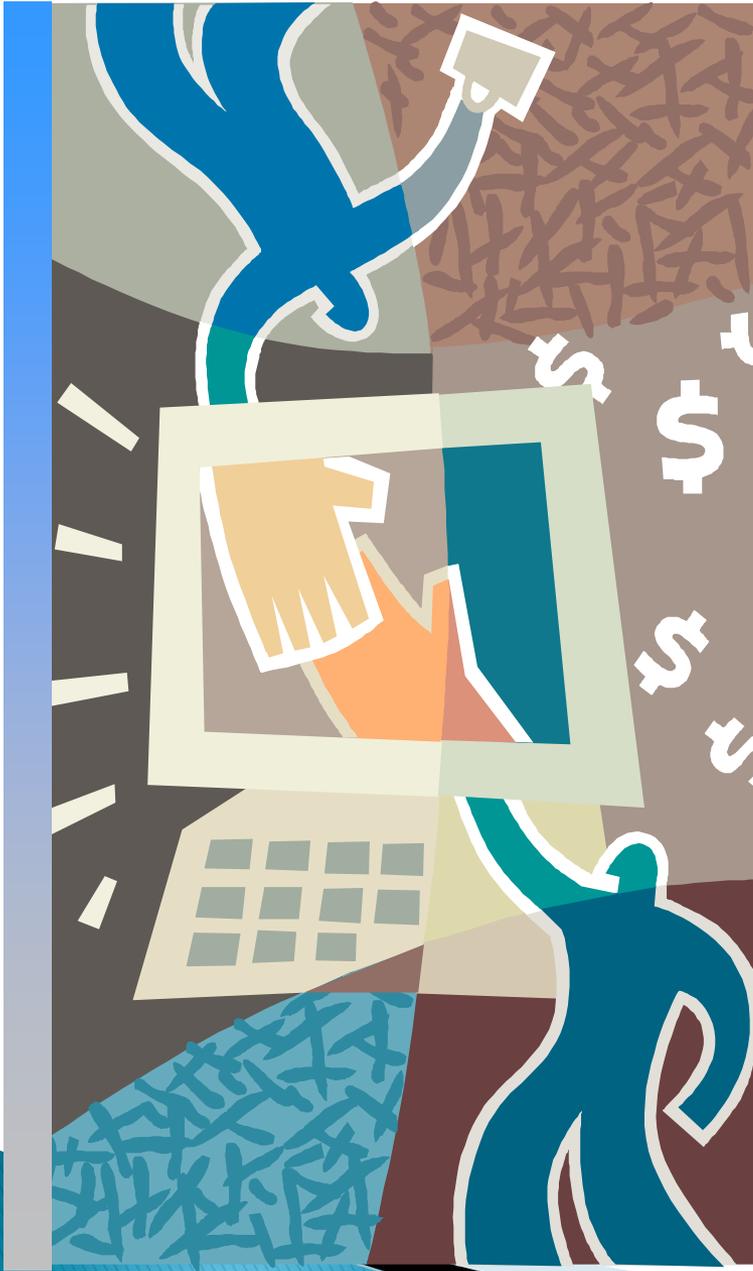
- Make sure your clothing fits well.
- Do not wear anything that is too tight or ill-fitting.
- No T-shirts, polo shirts, tank tops, camisoles, or sleeveless tops or dresses.
- Hair should be well groomed and clean. Opt for the conservative look.



- Ladies – no open toed shoes and if you are wearing a dress or skirt, hosiery is a must.
- Avoid the short skirts and tight-fitting tops.
- CONSERVATIVE** – if you question your choice – don't wear it!



Make sure all clothing is clean, pressed and in good repair (i.e. no stains, no loose or missing buttons, no broken zippers, no snags or runs in pantyhose, heels of shoes not run down, shoes clean, unscratched and polished, if possible.)

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- Avoid showing tattoos. If you have them – make sure you cover them.
  - Body piercings – Remove all the visible “body jewelry” you can. It is recommended you forgo all body piercing jewelry – especially tongue piercing jewelry.
  - Avoid unnatural hair colorings, purple, green, etc.
  - No chewing gum.

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- Minimal jewelry – err on the conservative side.
  - Ladies - minimal makeup, fingernails and perfume. Be classic and tasteful, not overdone.
  - Use moderation. Clean hair, showered and use deodorant.
  - If you are interviewing on a Friday with a company that observes “casual Friday”, you do not dress casual. Follow the practice of wearing a suit as noted above.



- Men – wear a suit.
- Minimal cologne, clean neatly trimmed nails.
- Remove body piercings and earrings.
- Make sure any tattoos are covered.
- Use moderation. Clean hair, showered and use deodorant.
- Hair – polished look. Facial hair should be neatly trimmed or freshly shaved (no scruff).
- Avoid “casual Friday” apparel - you do not dress casual.



- Use a firm handshake whether being greeted by a man or a woman. Shake hands when introduced and when you leave.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Always turn off or silence your cell phone. Do not put it on vibrate.
- Send a hand-written thank you note following your interview.



Keep in mind that this is the practice of law. Working in the law office environment is a wake-up call. It is much more formal and traditional than any other type of office.



# Ethics in the Interview

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- Your resume must be factual and accurate.
  - Spelling and/or grammar errors are unacceptable.
  - Present your references on a separate page at the time of interviewing.



Companies now check social media, i.e. Facebook, etc. for your postings and for legal research.

Limit what is posted on personal Facebook pages (i.e., inappropriate photos, profanity, party scenes, etc.)

Once it's there, it's there forever.

Remember your professional image.

# The Client Interview





Interviewing a client coming into your office should be kept on the same par as when you interviewed for the job.

You should not be a distraction to the client coming into your office.



- Remember the “dress code” and dress appropriately.
- Use a firm handshake.
- Speak distinctly.
- Do not make the mistake of giving advice or making promises to the client.



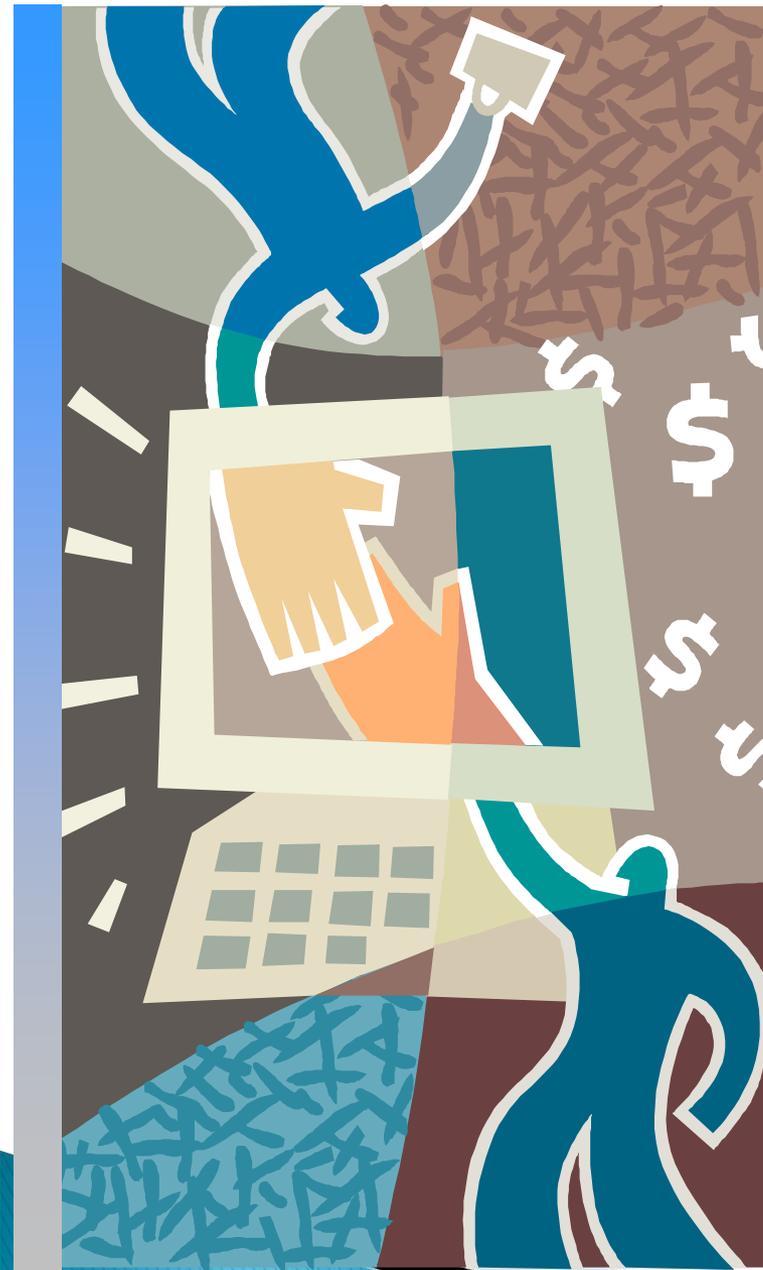
Initially you will be meeting clients with an attorney or other assistants.

Do not expect to immediately begin interviewing clients solo.



Come in to the client interview with a list of pre-set questions and follow the list.

This will help to avoid going off-topic with other questions the client may ask.



# Ethics in the Client Interview



Above all, make sure the client knows you are a Paralegal and NOT an attorney, and avoid answering questions that could be construed as giving advice!



# Ethics in the Office



It is unethical for you to discuss client matters with another Paralegal in your law office, with office staff of any kind, or with another attorney who is not working on the case.



Do not read other client files outside of the clients with whom you and your attorney are working.



Do not talk or gossip to others in the office about any clients.



Do not mention cases,  
client names, or any  
other identifying  
confidential information  
while in the elevator,  
hallways, or other public  
places.



- Always knock before entering an office.
- Wait for an ok to enter.
  - Find out what your employer's culture or policy is on this.



When on the phone, if someone walks into your office, do not interrupt the call.

When your phone call is done, call the person who came to your office.



# Scenario

#1



# Scenario

## #2



# Scenario

#3



# Office Etiquette



When greeting a client or visitor upon their arrival to your workplace, extend your hand for a firm handshake, make eye contact, smile.

Do the same when a client leaves.

A vertical collage of abstract, stylized elements. At the top, a blue hand holds a white document. Below it, a computer monitor displays a hand cursor. To the right, several white dollar signs are scattered. At the bottom, a keyboard is visible. The background consists of various textured and solid-colored shapes in shades of brown, blue, and grey.

Escort a client to the elevators, or at least back to the reception area, instead of leaving them to find their own way out.

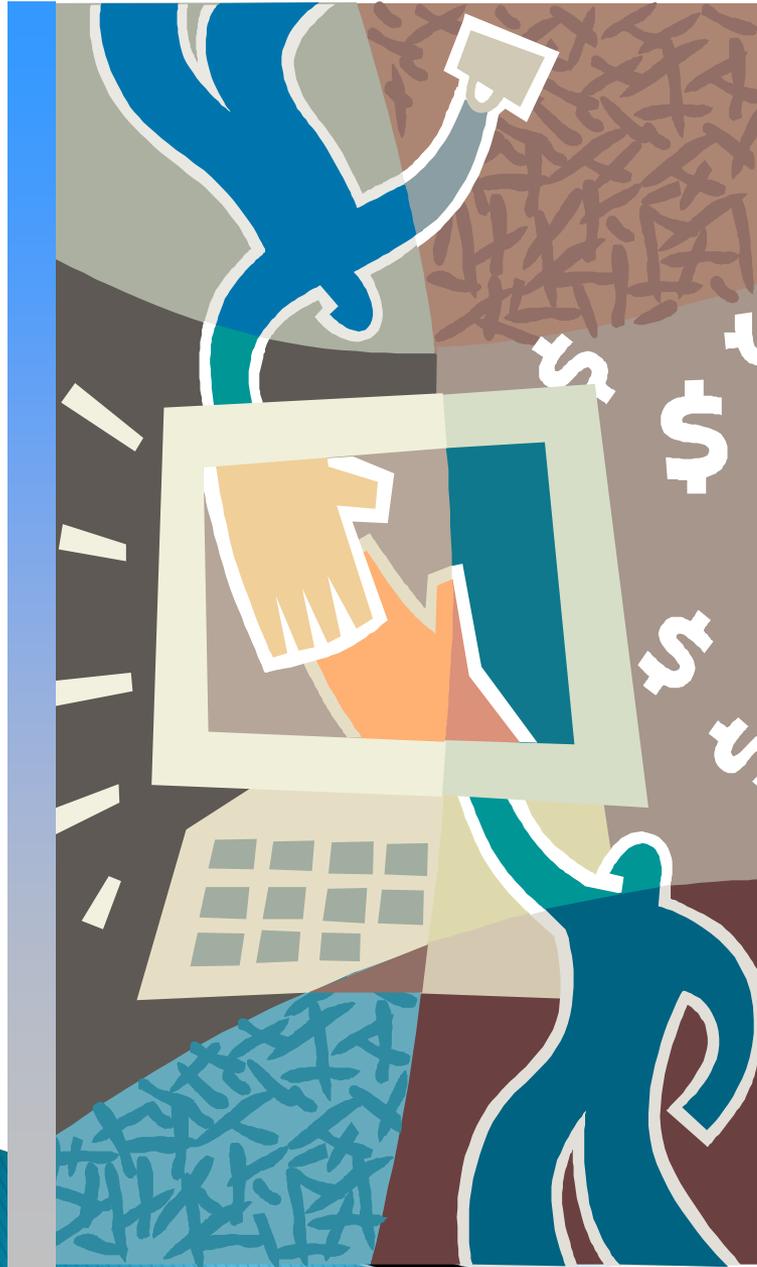


It is best practice to keep cell phones turned off during meetings. Especially do not check or send text messages during meetings or meals with others.

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- Practice conscious control of nervous habits such as biting nails, twisting your hair, drumming your fingers or swinging your foot.

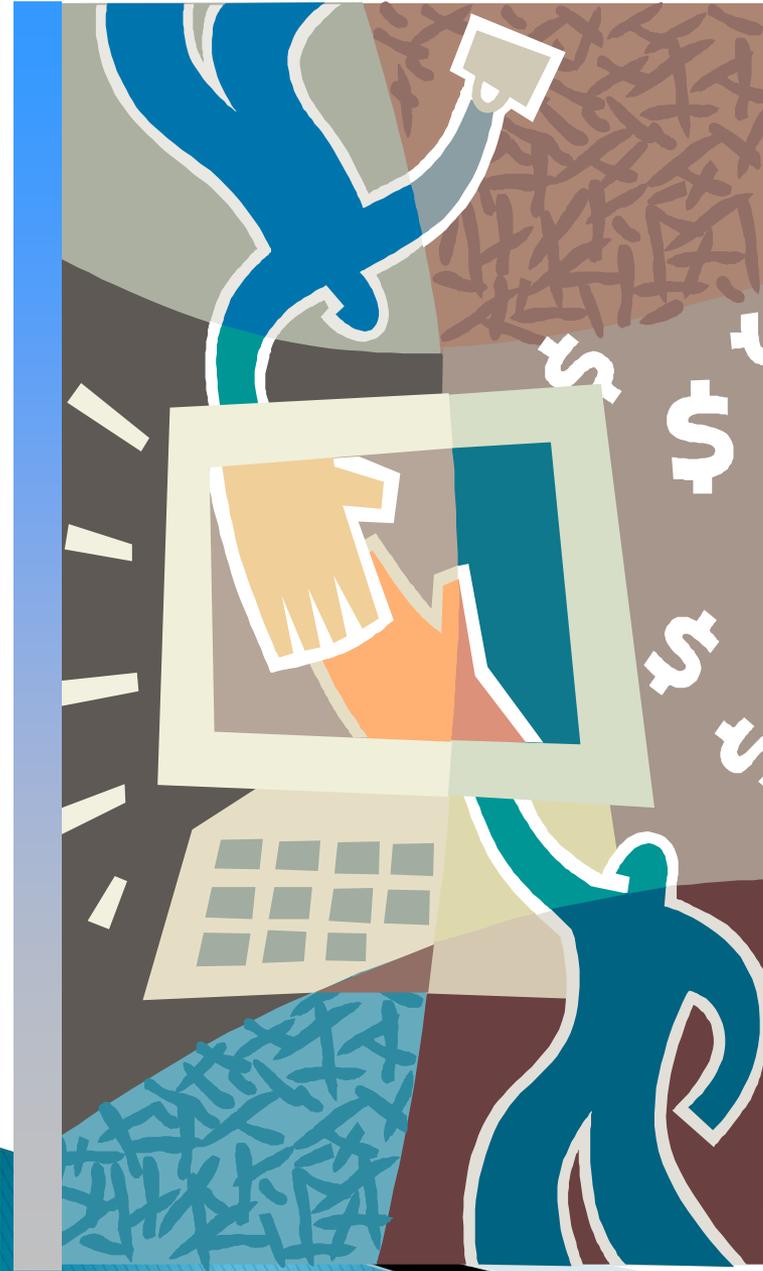


- No gum chewing during client meetings.
- Definitely, do not chew tobacco in the workplace.



No profanity.  
No sexual innuendo.

These things provide a  
negative image of you  
and your employer.



# Ethics in Cyberspace



Be aware of the law office's policies on social media. It is always prudent not to use Facebook, etc. during working hours.



Employers have the capability to check to see how long you have been on the internet, what sites you have visited, and anything you send or receive via e-mail.



Don't make the mistake of committing *anything* obscene, provocative, profane or offensive to media of any kind.