

Alabama Lawyers Association

“Developing a Specialty” by Joel Caldwell

Why do you care about being niche?

- Do you want to learn all the law?
 - Laws fit on books, and books fit on library shelves
 - There are too many laws and you will never know all of them

Different Ways to Develop a Specialty

1. Unintentional: something lands in your lap

- Something walks in your office door – you learn it, embrace it, and make it your own
- Getting a good settlement or verdict
- After that, you discover you like it and continue to master your craft.

2. Intentional

- Partner at your office hire you and tells you that you are going to be the ____ guru.
 - Learn this information and tell me about it
- Work on a case, find out you enjoy something and then work on it
 - Research through books, journals, or online
 - Reading over depositions
 - For products liability cases – reading over expert deposition and expert reports
 - You want to become so fluent in the material that you can talk to anyone about it from layman’s terms to experts
 - Attending CLEs
 - Hiring someone to teach you the material
 - YouTube is a valuable resource

Consider Your Purpose

- What’s the purpose of developing a specialty if you can’t get the client or if there are no clients?
- How are you going to make money?
 - M.I.A.M.I.
 - Developing a case needs to help you make money
 - How am I going to get the clients?

A Niche is “That Guy”

- You have to tell people. A closed mouth doesn’t get fed. If you don’t speak, how will people listen?
- Your niche needs to be unique.
- An area of law that makes people call you
 - You want to know the particular law so well where colleagues don’t have to learn something more
 - They can quickly come to you and learn something
 - You must welcome interruption and questions
 - Open door policy

Pick Your Laws

- I don’t want to do:
 - I don’t want to do criminal defense law because I don’t like hanging with criminals
 - I don’t want to do personal injury because personal injury lawyers are ambulance chasers
- Do what works for you and where you can have the most joy and M.I.A.M.I.

Remember:

- You can learn another niche; you’re not limited

- Developing a niche is not a limitation