

EASTMAN & SMITH LTD.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Established 1844



Solo Librarian: Tips and Tricks

About Eastman & Smith Ltd.

- General civil practice law firm based in Toledo, Ohio
- Total of four offices in two states . . . plus multiple home offices!
- 75 attorneys
- 20 paralegals



Columbus



Detroit



Findlay



Toledo

and me

Thus, focus on fast, efficient and effective service and resources for attorneys as well as clients . . . while maintaining sanity!

15 Tips and Tricks of Being a Solo While Keeping Your Sanity Intact.



#1 You Are Not Alone.



- Have a network of folks you can depend on, pick their brains, hang out with or will listen to your tale of woe.
- Include non-librarians/info pros.
 - SLA and SLA's Solo Division
 - Community, Professional, Religious Groups
 - Elevator/Stores/Gaming

#2 Librarian, Meet Organization. Organization, Meet Librarian.

- Know your organization, its goals, the people and its culture.
 - [Understanding and Developing Organizational Culture](#) (SHRM)
- Be visible and accessible.
 - [How to Raise Your Visibility at Work](#) (Balance Careers)



#3 Education: “She’s so much more than a librarian.”

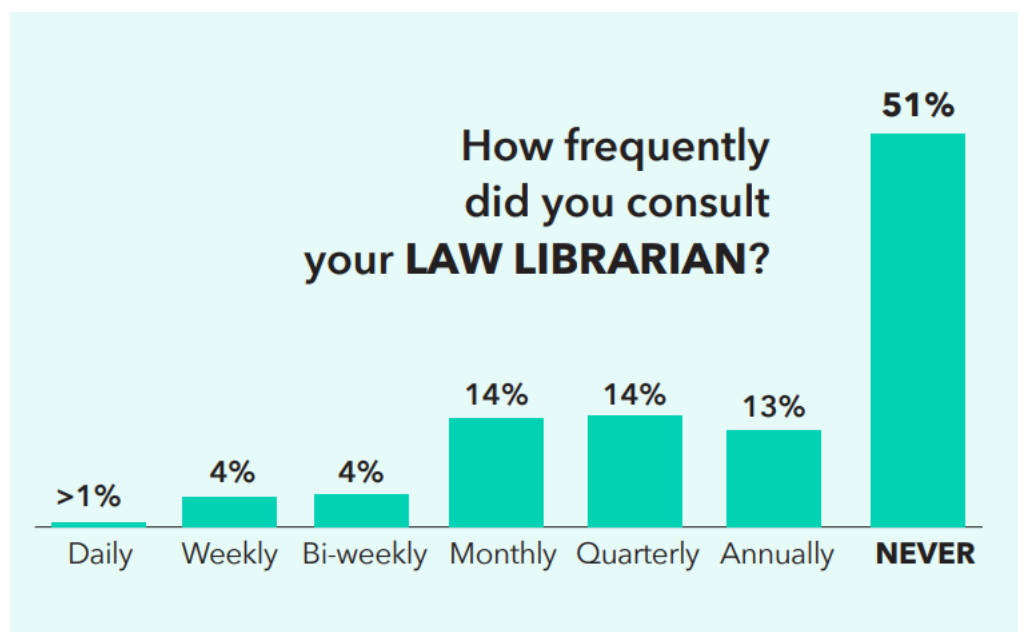


People’s perceptions
of librarians



What people’s reactions
should be.

#3 Education: “She’s so much more than a librarian.”



“Law students rarely consult their law librarians, even though at their busiest they spend about 12 hours a week researching.”

[From: 2021 Law School Preparedness Survey \(BloombergLaw\)](#)

#4 Patience, Empathy, Politeness, Resilience, Humor: Those Soft Skills Count!



“Oh good, I see that you have been a waitress. That means you know how to keep smiling when all heck is breaking loose around you.”

Comment from interviewer who became my boss.

- [CNBC – 5 Soft Skills for Work](#)

#5 You Say Potato, I Say Solanum Tuberosum.

- Avoid librarianspeak. Use the industry's terminology.
- Just because it makes sense to you doesn't mean others get it.
 - [Communicating Professionally: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians](#)
(Neal-Schuman)



#6 Like Fine Wine, Good Results Take Time and Sometimes the Wine is Corked.

- We live in reality, not TV land. Manage customer expectations.
- No is an answer.
- [“Managing Expectations at Work: Why It Is Important and How to Do It.”](#) (Niagara Institute)



#7 Triage: Not Just for Doctors

- Ability to discern what gets top priority. Need to multitask and, some days, just roll with it. Time management/project management are key.
- [“3 Ways Librarians Can Multi-Task Better”](#)
(Wiley)
- [Time Management: 10 Strategies for Better Time Management](#) (University of Georgia Extension)



#8 Use Your Transferable Skills!

- Have a degree in another field? Are you an expert on spreadsheets? Can you make a motor purr? Use these skills in your job (when applicable of course)!
- [Transferable Skills](#) (SJSU School of Information)
- [Transferable Skills Checklist](#) (Rogue Community College)



#9 Be Proactive Pat.

- Volunteer, speak up, tell people you are interested, take on a task or say “hey I saw this and thought of you.”



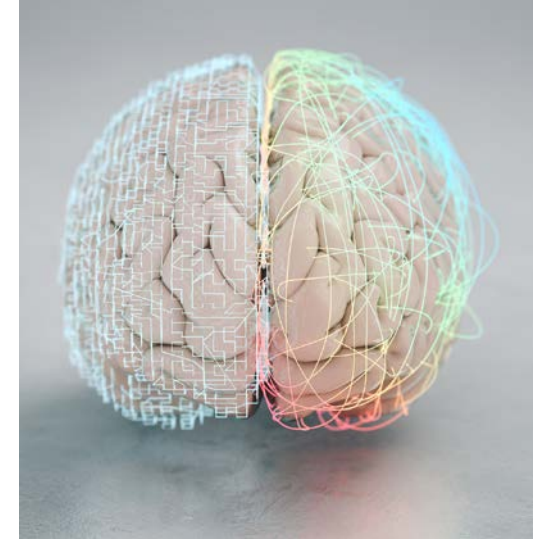
#10 There Are Way Too Many Cats if Curiosity Kills.

- Be curious about your organization, your profession, your coworkers, the world around you.
 - Example: 62% of K-12 schools have a full-time librarian/library media specialist. ([NCES](#))
 - [“Business Case for Curiosity”](#) (HBR)
- Develop new skills or interests.
- Keep up with professional developments.
 - [Informed Librarian](#)
 - [PinHawk Librarian News Digest](#)
 - John DiGilio, SLA Member



#11 Use That Brain!

- Thinking skills and intuition are invaluable.
- [“10 Essential Critical Thinking Skills \(And How to Improve Them\).”](#)
(Indeed)
- [“Positive Thinking: Stop Negative Self-talk to Reduce Stress”](#) (Mayo Clinic)



#12 Look for Ways to Say Yes.

- Something isn't available, then what is? (Solution needs to be ethically/legally compliant to boot.)
- [“Seven Steps for Effective Problem Solving in the Workplace”](#)
(Mediate.com)



#13 Cloning is for Sheep.

- It is okay to say no or not now.
 - [“How to Say No at Work”](#) (Forbes)



Baaaad Day – How's
Tomorrow?

#14 Get a Hobby.



- A relaxed mind is a productive mind.
- [“How Hobbies Can Improve Your Happiness and Productivity at Work”](#)
(Fast Company)

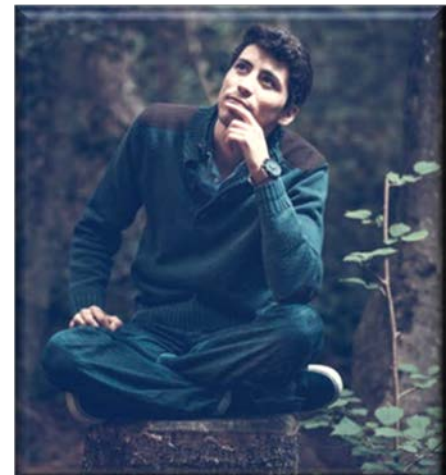
#15 Lock Yourself in the Loo.



- Hide somewhere for a couple of minutes, breathe and relax. Your performance will not be up to par if you're frazzled.
- [Mayo Clinic's Relaxation Techniques](#)

In sum:

- People Need People.
- Soft Skills Count and Your Ancillary Skills Too.
- Communicate/Educate/Market
- Volunteer
- Be Curious, Thoughtful and Intuitive.
- Know Your Organization.
- Learn to Balance Competing Priorities.
- Look for Ways to Say Yes and No.
- Manage Expectations.
- Practice Self Care.



Summation from a Colleague:

“You possess skills, talent, expertise that they rely on to do their jobs and advise clients. Be patient, flexible, and go with the flow. Keep up on professional reading, even if it is just skimming articles. Have a healthy and professional attitude towards your job and coworkers. Be visible. Engage the help of others where possible and work well with them.”

Beth Langton

Hahn Loeser

For assistance:

- [How to Thrive as a Solo Librarian](#) Editors: Carol Smallwood & Melissa J. Clapp, 2012
- [The New OPL Sourcebook: A Guide for Solo and Small Libraries](#) Judith A. Siess, 2006
- [Succeeding in the World of Special Librarianship](#) Stephen Abram, 2018 (SLA Member)
- SLA's Learning Hub
- Public Libraries:
 - LearningExpress Library
 - LinkedIn Learning



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