

Lawyers holding court in the blogosphere

By JEREMY HARRELL

Attorney Diane Pfadenhauer was conducting a workshop last week when an attendee asked for more information about a topic. Rather than go into more detail on the spot, Pfadenhauer referred the questioner to her Web log.

"Simple," the Northport-based human resource attorney said via e-mail (naturally). Pfadenhauer started her blog (strategichrlawyer.com) nearly a year ago, has contributed 200 posts and now gets about 5,000 site visits per month. More than 130 other blogs link to hers.

She described her blog as a combination between a marketing tool and resource center. It has generated business, connected her to other professionals from around the country and world and encouraged her to keep up with the shifting trends of her practice area.

"Since I post several times a week, I am always staying in touch with changes in the field," she wrote, adding, "In the employment law and human resources space, there are many blogs that are routinely engaged in a virtual ongoing online conversation. Traditional online media (like e-zines) also link to blogs and engage in the discussion."

It's worth thinking of a blog as a big, extended business card. When meeting someone new, whether a colleague or

potential client, directing the person to the blog is an easy way to expand the relationship, said Arnie Herz, a mediation specialist in Port Washington, whose blog (legalsanity.com) receives 3,000 unique visitors per month, resulting in 27,000 page views.

"It's a combination between marketing and commentary," Herz said. "It's a chance to disseminate information and establish expertise in a sub-sub-specialty. Lawyers are always looking to publish, and blogging is a perfect forum for that. Plus, the cost is cheap, and it's easy."

Pfadenhauer said a love of writing and publishing also drew her to the world of blogging. Both Herz and Pfadenhauer link to multiple other law-related blogs, installing themselves in the larger blogosphere, and they link to their own published articles and list upcoming public appearances.

That's especially important for Herz, whose law practice is quickly becoming a springboard to his growing role as a motivational speaker. As the blog's name implies, many of Herz's posts deal with helping lawyers cope with the stress and strain of the profession.

"I wanted to raise my profile in the legal community," he said. "The blog rose out of a need to find a platform of sorts."