



**WSSFC 2023**

**QOL/Ethics Track – Session 8**

# **Challenges and Benefits of Solo Practice**

***Presented By:***

*Zeshan Usman, Usman Law Firm LLC, Madison*

*Jody L. Cooper, Cooper Law Office, Milton*

## About the Presenters...

**Zeshan Usman** grew up watching his immigrant father's hard work propel him from dishwasher to successful business owner. His father's entrepreneurial spirit rubbed off on him. While still attending to his formal education, Zeshan started Usman Realty and worked as a licensed Real Estate Broker, Mortgage Broker, and General Contractor. In 2007, as the great recession loomed, Zeshan received a J.D., M.B.A. from the University of Miami. In the midst of a burst in the housing bubble, he took what he learned working in real estate and transitioned his focus from Usman Realty to Usman Law. Since starting Usman Law fifteen years ago, Zeshan has helped thousands of people straighten out their finances and fight back against abusive debt collectors and unreasonable insurance claim adjusters. His practice is limited to personal injury and debt relief.

**Jody L. Cooper** is a graduate of UW-Whitewater with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a minor in German. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Marquette Law School in 1995. Since graduating from law school, Attorney Cooper has been involved in the private practice of law including real estate, bankruptcy, estate planning, probate, contracts, and family law. Jody continues to practice law in her solo office in Milton, where she works in a variety of practice areas in addition to providing consultations related to office management, legal technology, and data privacy. Attorney Cooper's teaching experience started at Blackhawk Technical College, where she ran the Legal Administrative Professional program for 12 years and received the Teacher of the Year award from her colleagues and students. She is currently a full-time faculty member in the Legal Studies/Paralegal Program at Madison College. Her teaching focuses on law office technology, e-Discovery, legal research, employment law, and contracts. Ms. Cooper is a DEIB Partner through the Institute for Equity & Transformational Change at Madison College.

## **Challenges And Benefits of Solo Practice**

Attorney Jody L. Cooper, Cooper Law Office  
Attorney Z. Usman, Usman Law

### **Session Description:**

In solo practice, you have flexibility, total control over business decisions, and a personal investment in your firm's success. But you also bear complete responsibility for anything that goes wrong which is undeniably stressful. Learn how you can start or keep flying solo while maintaining your sanity and generating profits.

### **1. Introductions and Origin of Solo Practice**

- a. Introductions
  - i. Attorney Z. Usman
  - ii. Attorney Jody L. Cooper
- b. Decision to Practice as Solo
  - i. Stress and Nervousness Related to Firm Success
  - ii. Reasons for Choosing Solo Practice
  - iii. Initial Problems and Setbacks
- c. Office Set Up, Location, Logistics

### **2. Benefits of Solo Practice**

- a. Personal Investment in Firm Success
  - i. Success of the Practice
    - 1. Predict and Handle Issues
    - 2. Future Planning
      - a. Act on Business Trends
      - b. Plan Workload/Personal Load
    - 3. Fully Aware of Trends and Changes in the Business
  - ii. Control of Business Decisions
    - 1. Workload
    - 2. Areas of Practice
    - 3. Purchasing
  - iii. Budget Planning
    - 1. Tax Considerations
    - 2. Technology and Hardware Needs
    - 3. Assistant/Paralegal
  - iv. Mistakes are Evident

- 1. More Easily Resolved
    - 2. Ability to Act Quickly
  - b. Building and Maintaining Relationships
    - i. Courthouse Personnel
    - ii. Other Solo Practitioners
    - iii. Networking Options
  - c. Flexibility
    - i. Full Control of Scheduling
      - 1. Personal Matters
        - a. Well-Being
        - b. Family/Personal Life
      - 2. Travel Requirements
      - 3. Remote Work
    - ii. Office Location and Style
    - iii. Professional Dress
      - 1. Court Appearance
      - 2. Service of Clients

### **3. Challenges of Solo Practice**

- a. Consideration Related to Work Benefits
  - i. Retirement Plan
  - ii. Insurance
    - 1. Malpractice
    - 2. Health/Life
  - iii. Tax Planning
    - 1. Self-Employment
    - 2. Business Expenses
    - 3. Other Deductions
  - iv. Employees
    - 1. Benefits
    - 2. Wages
    - 3. Scheduling
- b. Aware of Changes in Trends
  - i. Changes in Technology
  - ii. Court Procedure
- c. Creating a Professional Image/Reputation for the Solo Attorney
  - i. Perception of Less Professional
  - ii. Concern about Access to Resources
  - iii. Difficulty with Scheduling Appointments
- d. Decisions Related to Offers to Join Another Firm
  - i. Balance of Benefits and Challenges
  - ii. Giving Up Control

#### 4. Benefits vs. Challenges

- a. Less distractions and disagreements v. Less social interactions and other opinions
- b. Keeping all the revenue you bring in v. Sharing the burden to bring in revenue
- c. You control your future v. Only you control your future
- d. Time management freedom v. No backup when you are out
- e. You wear all the hats v. Each partner has their special strength

#### 5. Online Tools

- a. Phone Service – Grasshopper.com, RingCentral.com, Vonage.com
- b. Answering Service – CallRuby.com, Smith.ai, AlertCommunications.com
- c. eFax – FaxCompare.com
- d. Domain Specific Email – workspace.google.com
- e. Online To Do List – Todoist.com
- f. Billing Service – FreshBooks.com
- g. Virtual Assistants – Elance.com
- h. Logo Design – 99designs.com, fiverr.com
- i. Graphic Design – CSheltraw.com
- j. Court Records Search – CCAP.cc and PACER
- k. WisBar.org for attorney contact information
- l. Copies – BestValuCopy.com
- m. Printing Cards, Stationary, etc. –uprinting.com, printplace.com, gotprint.com
- n. Book Scanning Service – 1DollarScan.com
- o. Every Door Direct Mail - eddm.usps.com
- p. Phone Conferencing Service - FreeConferenceCall.com
- q. RSS Tracker for CCAP - blogtrotr.com
- r. Bulk Mailings and Service – CertificateOfService.com
- s. File Conversion - CloudConvert.com
- t. Transcription, Caption, Translation - Rev.com
- u. Payroll Service – Gusto.com
- v. Website Hosting – bluehost.com
- w. Domain Registration – NameCheap.com, BlueHost.com, Domain.com
- x. Postage Printing – DYMO.com
- y. Website Analytics - analytics.google.com
- z. Email Marketing – MailChimp.com and ConstantContact.com
- aa. Online Appointment Scheduling - calendly.com, apptoto.com
- bb. Automated Appointment Reminders - apptoto.com
- cc. eSignature – HelloSign.com or DocuSign.com, AdobeSign
- dd. Schedule an Email to be Sent Later – Boomerang for Gmail
- ee. Surveys – SurveyMonkey.com
- ff. Video of a Person Using Your Website - Peek.Usertesting.com
- gg. Password Management - 1Password and LastPass.com
- hh. Link Analytics - bitly.com
- ii. Date Calculator - WolframAlpha.com

Contact Information

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# Challenges and Benefits of Solo Practice

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**Attorney Jody L. Cooper, Cooper Law Office**

1 – Usman/Cooper

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## Discussion Topics:

- Introductions and Origins of Solo Practice
- Benefits of Solo Practice
- Challenges of Solo Practice
- Benefits v. Challenges
- Online Tools

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4 – Usman/Cooper

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## Benefits of Solo Practice

- Personal Investment in Firm Success
- Control of Business Decisions
- Budget Planning
- Mistakes are Evident
- Building and Maintaining Relationships
- Flexibility

5 – Usman/Cooper

5

## Usman Law – Office



6 – Usman/Cooper

6

## Usman Law - Marketing



7 – Usman/Cooper

7

## Usman Law - Reception



8 – Usman/Cooper

8

# Usman Law - Reception



9 – Usman/Cooper

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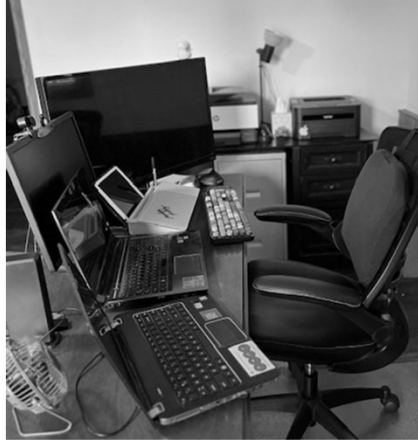
# Usman Law - Reception



10 – Usman/Cooper

10

## Cooper Law Office



11 – Usman/Cooper

11

## Cooper Law Office - Wellness



12 – Usman/Cooper

12

## Cooper Law Office - Wellness



13 – Usman/Cooper

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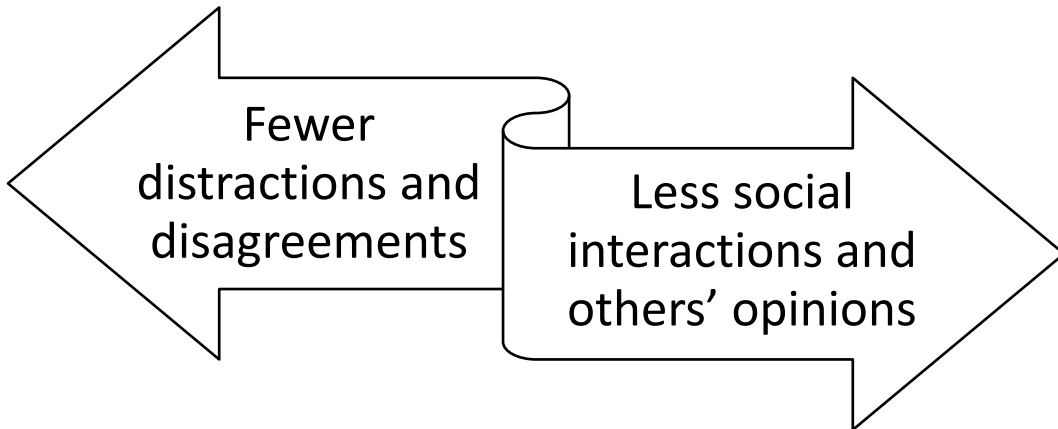
## Challenges of Solo Practice

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- Tax Planning
- Employees
- Aware of Changes in Trends
- Creating a Professional Image/Reputation for the Solo Attorney
- Decisions Related to Offers to Join Another Firm

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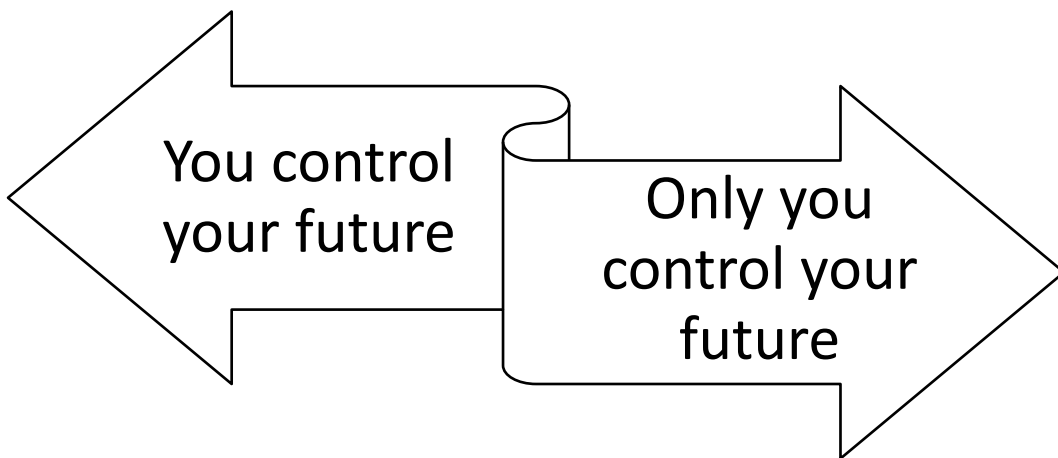
## Benefits v. Challenges



15 – Usman/Cooper

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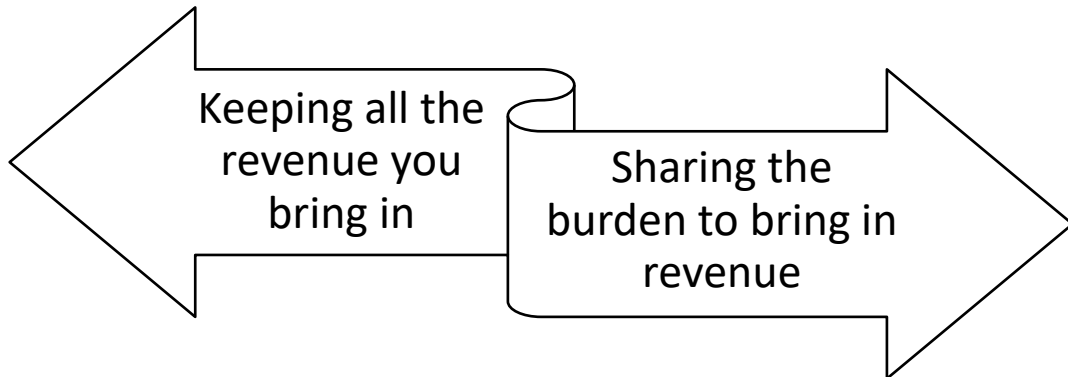
## Benefits v. Challenges



16 – Usman/Cooper

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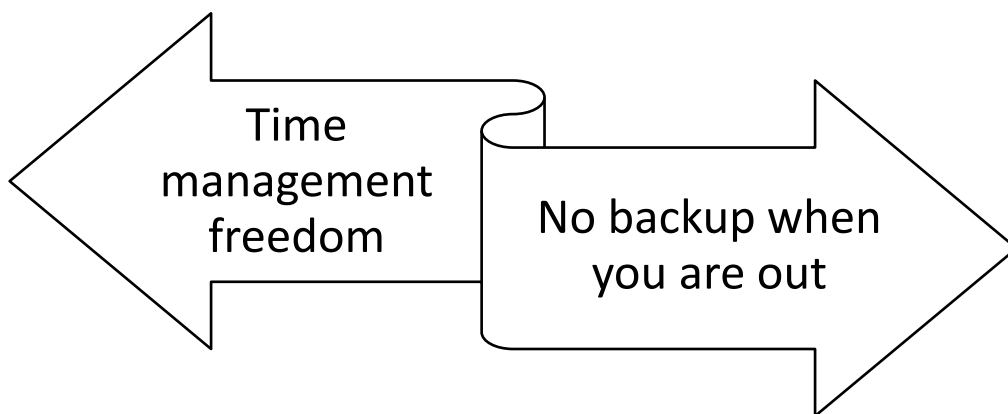
## Benefits v. Challenges



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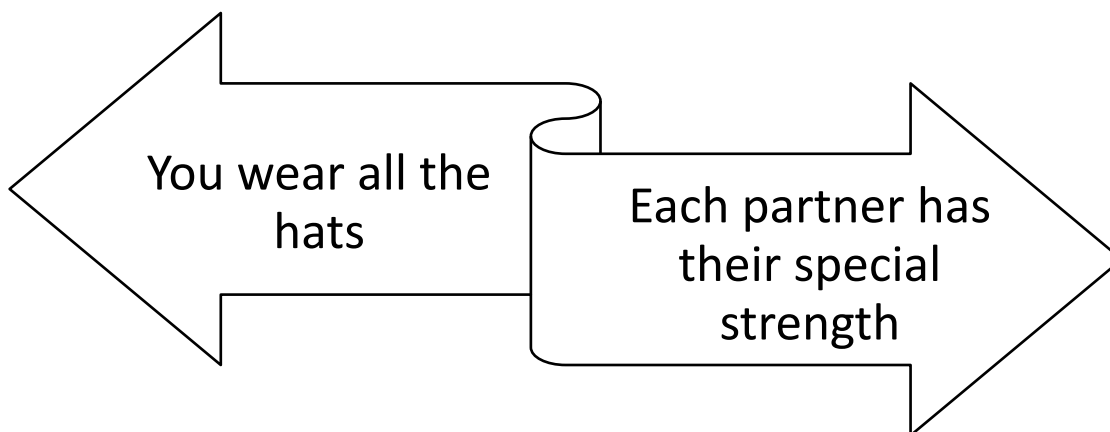
## Benefits v. Challenges



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## Benefits v. Challenges



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