



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about professional development with former big law recruiter, Sadie Jones. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan, and typically I'm here with Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website, [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolbox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about professional development with former big law recruiter, Sadie Jones. So, welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Now, this might come as a shock to some of our listeners, but you don't get to stop going to class when you graduate from law school. Most states, once you join the bar and become a lawyer, actually require that you do CLE, which is [continuing legal education](#), either once a year or once every few years. This is obviously a really important part of your professional development, so we're going to talk about this, and then we're also going to talk about some non-CLE things that people need to be thinking about. So, tell me a little bit about CLE. What is it, how does it work, what do you do? That kind of thing.

Sadie Jones: Well, I would say it's probably not the same in every state. I'm most familiar with California, but I think just using that as a basis, really, it's kind of keeping up your skills in different areas, and learning about things like mental health and substance abuse and ethics, and things you really need to stay up on, and issues that come up within the legal field. And so, they want you to actively be hearing about these issues and giving you advice about how to deal with them. So, I do think a lot of the topics are important.

I think it's very doable over a long period of time to do these credits, but it's the kind of thing where you want to keep up with it, so you're not left with a ton of stuff to do at the end. You want to think of it as part of your development as a lawyer on an ongoing basis.

Alison Monahan: I think that's right. I also know mostly about this from California, because thank goodness, Massachusetts, the other state I was barred in actually at the time did not have a CLE requirement, which was pretty nice, I got to say.



- Sadie Jones: Lucky.
- Alison Monahan: I mean, on the one hand, yeah, okay, this is all important, and we should be taking classes and staying up to date. On the other hand, to be honest, it's pretty annoying when you have to sit down at the end of your three years and say, "Okay, have I done my hour of this? Have I done my hour of that?" Because some of it is dictated for you. I can't remember exactly what they require. I think it was something around 30 hours, maybe? Over-
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, and sometimes it changes, and it changes what the specific areas are. Usually, there's a set number of hours and then some of those hours have to be in specific areas.
- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Sadie Jones: So, you can have more than you need in the general bucket, but you can't have less than in ethics or ... There's one in bias, which I think is really important, so things like that. They're usually just a few hours each.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, so there's certain ones that people think are important for you to do, which you're required to do. The thing that can be kind of annoying about it, I think honestly even more than the doing of it, is that you really need to document your own compliance. If you go to a session, they're probably going to have a sign-in sheet for you. You're probably going to get some piece of paper at the end that shows that you were there. You have to keep track of all that stuff.
- Sadie Jones: Yes.
- Alison Monahan: At the end of three years, you can't just be like, "Oh, I remember I went to this thing, and yeah, it was about three hours." There are really strict requirements for if you're doing a presentation, for getting CLE, and what type of CLE you get, and how many hours you get. So, you've really got to be on top of this over the period of time, or you're going to end up in a world of hate at the end of it.
- Sadie Jones: Yes. And something I'd bring up, what you just mentioned about how there'll be a sign-in sheet and you'll get a piece of paper, I think that some people are confused that they think the sign-in sheet is somehow going to be recorded for them.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Not true.
- Sadie Jones: You know, because you've signed in. Right. Really, the sign-in sheet is for the person giving the CLE, that they can actually authorize it, because they need to turn in certain materials to say it is CLE. But you keeping that piece of paper is



100% your responsibility, and I've never been anywhere where they keep pieces of paper for you as a firm or as an employer.

- Alison Monahan: No, I think that's right. You need to have some sort of process for keeping track of this stuff, whether it's that you have a certain folder that you put all of this stuff into, or whether you immediately take a picture of it and you file it in a certain Dropbox folder. You got to have something, so that when you go back two and a half years from now, you're not sitting there going, "Oh my gosh, where is that piece of paper?" Obviously you're never going to find it again. As soon as you start getting these, you've got to keep track of them.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and I think there are people who have assistance. Maybe you have a secretary, and maybe it is okay that you hand it to them and tell them to put it in a file. But I actually think it's better that you take this on yourself, or know exactly where the file is, and check on it. Because I have seen a lot of mishaps with things like that.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, what if your secretary leaves and they don't remember to tell someone where the thing is, and then suddenly you're missing two years of CLE credits? This primarily is your responsibility. And I think doing it electronically just makes a ton of sense. What if the building burns down and your only copy is that one folder? It's just not a great situation to be in.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and it doesn't need to be an original document or anything. You just need that piece of paper, and that you've signed it and everything. That's completely fine.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, you might track it on a spreadsheet, and then just have a link or whatever. This is not rocket science.
- Sadie Jones: Correct.
- Alison Monahan: You've got to keep up with this stuff, or you're ...
- Sadie Jones: And what I'd add is, I think people also may not realize that when you actually report it, it's you who usually goes into a system online and reports that you've done your CLE by a certain date. It is the honor system in terms of that. I would make sure you went through and looked through everything, made sure that you did it. The thing where it can come around again is that they do audits every single year, and I've seen a ton of attorneys get audited, and that's where they come back and check all your forms. So maybe they won't, but if they do, and you don't have it, it is a really big deal.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, essentially, I would say that's probably an ethical violation at that point.



Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: You've essentially lied about doing your continuing legal education. It's not going to put you in a very nice spot with the bar exam.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Or I mean, sorry, with the bar examiners.

Sadie Jones: So that's why you really want to have copies of everything. It's like your taxes. You don't want it to be a problem if it comes around.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Most likely, nobody's ever going to ask, but if they do ask, you need to be able to document this. I can't remember, I might have gotten audited once randomly in California.

Sadie Jones: I know it's kind of a nightmare.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I can't really remember.

Sadie Jones: Unless you were very organized.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I legitimately had done it and had all the copies of everything, but it still was like, "Oh my gosh, what is going on here?" All right, well, let's talk a little bit about how people can fill these CLE requirements, because it sounds like kind of a big deal.

Sadie Jones: Yes. Well, I think there's lots of things that you can do to fill these without even realizing it sometimes. If you're a licensed attorney, you get invited to events or for example, your local bar association, things like that. Sometimes there are dinners where there's a speaker and they're CLE available.

Alison Monahan: Oh, those are the best, yeah.

Sadie Jones: So then it's free food.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's like somebody's paying for you to eat pretty nice food.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, exactly.

Alison Monahan: You're networking, and you get an hour of CLE credit. You're like, "Yes!"

Sadie Jones: But, you need to probably follow up to get the piece of paper. This is where people go wrong. You just being there doesn't give you the CLE. You have to actually get the credit for it. So just remember. But I would say, look at these



events, these seminars, these talks, whatever. See if they say they're CLE available. If it sounds like something that might be CLE eligible, you could ask, if for some reason they didn't write it down.

Aside from that, a lot of big firms, and maybe even smaller firms, have CLE events. They're specifically maybe hosting something where they bring in clients also, and they're trying to provide CLE, and it especially comes up towards the end.

Alison Monahan: Right, when everyone's scrambling to get their CLE done.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. So, you get clients in, they get some CLE for it. So, look for those. I would say a lot of your internal trainings have CLE credits. So, you know, actually showing up for these meetings can get you something aside from hopefully learning something. So there's some examples. There's also lots of ways to get it online. There's [PLI](#) that I know at firms I've been at, there's free access for all the attorneys. Basically, you log in and you can do all sorts of programs.

Alison Monahan: They have basically CLE about everything you could think of, really.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. So, I would say that if you can get more of the in-person events, it's probably more interesting than just trying to get them all done at the end online, but that's an easy way to do it. Usually there are requirements about how many hours you can do active versus passive, and so just make sure you know how many hours you've already done that maybe are just online, where you're just clicking a button and going through something, because usually there's only about half of the hours that are allowed to be done that way. And there are some online programs where they're recordings of live things. Those are considered active also, but I would keep track of that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you definitely need to keep track that you're meeting whatever requirements there are in your state. Sometimes, too, things like PLI have free pro bono options, so that can actually be a really good way to do it if you just need to fill some hours, don't really want to pay for it. You can learn something interesting, and you might be able to do it online in the comfort of your home. Another place that people sometimes don't really think about that you can really get some good CLE credits are at conferences. If there's a conference in your area of interest, this is a great opportunity to do some networking, maybe have some nice food, and also learn something and get some credit for it. I think you do have a lot of options. Even sometimes local schools will have lunch events or evening events that you can go to, and those are CLE eligible.

In fact, another thing you can do is if you find yourself teaching CLE for whatever reason, say at a law school you're teaching a class or something like that, or you're teaching some sort of professional development class for young



lawyers, that actually gets you a ton of CLE, because you get to be the teacher and give yourself the credit, basically.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and you get to multiply it. I can't remember the exact math, but I've done it before. You get more hours than the hours you're actually doing, doing stuff like that. And sometimes, you also can get hours for preparing for it.

Alison Monahan: Right. They give you credit, basically, for the work that you do to put on this presentation, which can be pretty awesome.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. And I know at firms I've worked at, we would always be trying to get attorneys in to do a presentation at a law school, and we would advertise it that way. So, don't ignore those things. It's like a great opportunity.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. That touches on some other important professional opportunities, professional development activities that we're going to talk about where it's not just you increasing your knowledge in a certain area or checking a box. There are a lot of other things you need to be doing for your own professional development. And let's talk about that. You've worked at a lot of law firms. I always had the impression people sort of thought that somebody else was going to make these choices for them about what they should be doing. Is that true?

Sadie Jones: I don't think that's true, and I think it might be advertised to you that way, but I think in reality, [you're responsible for your career](#). And you're responsible for your development, so hopefully the place you work are giving you ideas of different benchmarks that you should be hitting as you move through your career, but if you're not hitting them, there isn't necessarily someone who's going to say, "Oh, you haven't done a deposition. How do we make that happen?"

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: You need to actively say, "I haven't done a deposition. I'm a fifth year. I really need to figure this out. Is there a pro bono opportunity or something?" That's just an example of where I think that you have to take your career into your own hands, and make sure that you're asking for things that you feel like you need to get to the next step.

Alison Monahan: I think that's right, and I think that applies regardless of the type of job that you're in. I mean, it's very easy for people just to put their heads down and do their day-to-day work, and not really think about, "Am I doing the things I want to do to progress to the next step of my career?" The reality is, you're probably not going to stay at that first job, whatever it is, for your entire career. At some point, you're going to be that person who is advocating for yourself when you're doing a job interview or whatever and saying, "I have taken depositions. I have



written this brief. I have done this type of thing that I should have done to be useful at the point I'm in my career." And that's really up to you.

- Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and I think that there may be things available to you where you work. Hopefully you've been given a mentor, or you've found a mentor, which I always recommend also. A lot of places do assignment tours, but I also think that you'll have informal mentors. I think we've all had that.
- Alison Monahan: Sure.
- Sadie Jones: People we connect with who are more senior. And so, I think it's good that you as the younger attorney maybe suggest on a quarterly basis, "Let's go out for lunch, and could we talk about my career and where I am?"
- Alison Monahan: I think absolutely, and that person doesn't have to be at your workplace, either. If you're out in the community, doing some CLE credits, say, on site, obviously the other people in that room are probably interested in the same things, and you might start chatting at a coffee break. Maybe you get their email for the person that you thought seemed the most receptive or the most interesting, and you say, "[I'd love to take you for coffee and really hear about your career,](#)" whatever. Maybe send an occasional follow-up article; "I saw this. I thought you might find it interesting," so that you become that person that they have an interest in, and they might be willing to help you along the way.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: And the same thing with pro bono. You mentioned getting different skills through pro bono. It's also a great way to get mentors in a certain area. I remember when I was thinking of leaving the firm, I was like, "Maybe I want to do something else," and I took a family law case, and they gave me basically a list of all the top family lawyers in San Francisco, and were like, "If you have any questions, you can reach out to these people for help."
- Sadie Jones: Wow.
- Alison Monahan: Of course I reached out to them, you know? I basically went down the list and was like, "Oh, this person looks interesting. They're successful. They're running their own practice. Let me see if she'll help me on my case." So I went and actually had a meeting in her office, and after about five minutes of discussing the case, which frankly wasn't that complicated, she was sort of like, "Well, tell me about your career. What are you thinking? Why are you still at a firm?" And I was like, "Well, actually, I'm thinking of leaving, and maybe I want to do what you do." And then we spent 30 minutes talking about that.



- Sadie Jones: That's amazing. I think that's a great example of you taking ownership, because I think a lot of people aren't thinking ahead like that.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think you need to be strategic here. And you also just don't know where contacts are going to come from. I know Lee, for example, she was on the board of a nonprofit, and made tons of interesting connections that way, and mentors, and people who were willing to help in and outside of the legal profession. A lot of those people who were on the board with her maybe were business people, not lawyers. So you're thinking a little more broadly about how to build that network of people that can help in your professional development. I think it's something you want to start thinking about early. Obviously you can't just join the board of an organization immediately. You probably need to go and maybe go to their benefit, and then you start volunteering, and then maybe you're a board member, or you're whatever. You lead some sort of event, and then they're like, "Oh, this person seems great. Do you want to be on the board?" But that's probably going to take you a little while.
- Sadie Jones: I agree. I think getting in early for opportunities when you're a younger lawyer so that you can build it up later. I also think, look to the people that maybe have a career you're interested in. You see that they ... Or I would even say more broadly, a life you're interested in. Does it seem like they have the balance you're looking for, and are they doing interesting work, but they still have a personal life? And that sort of thing. I think those are the people to reach out to and figure out, how did you get here?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. It doesn't have to be, oh, this person is a managing partner of a firm. You might look at them and be like, "Yeah, but they're on their third spouse and never see their children." You know? "That's not what I want."
- Sadie Jones: Exactly.
- Alison Monahan: All right, so let's go back to this thing you mentioned about benchmarks. What do you mean by that?
- Sadie Jones: Well, I think at firms I've been at, at least, usually they're pretty clearly laid out for different ... either class years or maybe a section of class years, so maybe first through third year, third through sixth year, that kind of thing. Because it's not necessarily that each year, you've developed a large new skill. It's something that can kind of cover your junior time, your mid-time, your senior time. And I would say that they're probably different depending on your practice area. For example-
- Alison Monahan: For sure. I mean, obviously if you're in corporate M&A deals, you're not doing depositions. It's just not relevant.





- Sadie Jones: Exactly. Exactly. But if we're talking about, let's say, litigation, taking a deposition by a certain point is probably a benchmark. You know, and it's also not ... I don't think it's like you have to feel like you failed at your career if you haven't gotten there yet. And maybe there are reasons you haven't gotten there, but I also do think it's on you, and the reason I use the example of looking for pro bono work is because sometimes it can be hard, especially at a big firm, to get that experience on a client case early. But usually, you have more opportunity on a pro bono case earlier. That's one example. But there's lots of different points you want to have hit by a certain time, otherwise you may not be developing at the rate you want to be.
- Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, I mean, you don't want to just be heads down, doing the same thing day after day after day. You want to be moving forward and developing your skills as a lawyer, because who knows where that's going to take you?
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. You want to feel like you've had actual experience in court by a certain point, if that's what you're looking for.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and some of this stuff actually is much easier outside of a firm.
- Sadie Jones: Yes.
- Alison Monahan: If you go work for the DA's office or the public defenders, you're going to have court experience from day one. Like, literally.
- Sadie Jones: And I would say a lot of firms have opportunities for you to go and work in those places. They're hard to get, so I wouldn't say that that's an easy thing, but a lot of people do take those opportunities at firms, even though they're stepping away from the firm maybe for six months or a year, and that can be hard. But they know they're going to get all of this experience. They're going to do trials, that sort of thing. So I think, look at every opportunity that might be available for you and put your name out there.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Sometimes it's almost like a sabbatical to go get this experience, or I think on the corporate side, what do they call them? Secondments?
- Sadie Jones: Secondments, yeah.
- Alison Monahan: Secondments where ... What is that?
- Sadie Jones: You can work in-house for a client. Let's say for six months, for a year, and I will say that I know a lot of people that got jobs out of that. And maybe not right away, but they made enough connections that down the road, they found an in-house position.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's a really good option if you're on the corporate side to take advantage of. A, it can just be kind of fun. I think of one of my law school classmates, did a secondment in Japan at some client, which sounded amazing.

Sadie Jones: Wow.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so it's just an opportunity to basically go and work somewhere else, and really be there day-to-day, and make those connections and get that experience, and do that professional development so that you're basically leveling up. You're doing something that other people are not doing, and of course it's going to put you on a different trajectory.

Sadie Jones: And I would say in terms of the benchmarks or these different things we're talking about, I think most people kind of figure them out based on where they see most of their associates are at a certain point. Not everybody is, but I think you do want to feel like you're hitting the points that other people in your class year are, because if you leave that firm and either want to go to another firm or go in-house, or work at a government job, you're competing against other people who are at your level. So you don't want to feel like you're not at the same point they are, but looking at the same kind of jobs.

Alison Monahan: Right. You've mentioned trying to take a pro bono case, probably strategically, to get some experience. What are some other things people can do or people they can talk to if they feel like they're not really hitting these benchmarks and not being where they should be in terms of their professional development?

Sadie Jones: Well, I would say that I would hope they're somewhere where they're getting [reviews](#) regularly, and this stuff is coming up. It may not be, in which case I would say there are probably people who work ... if you work at a firm in professional development, so there are staff members that that's their whole job, so you can talk to them about where to start. You can also talk to a mentor, either an assigned mentor or if you have developed a mentoring relationship at the place you work. You can also talk to someone who has a leadership position in your practice group, I think is always a good idea. I will say, I mean, it probably depends on the person. Not every head of litigation really wants to talk to a third year about their experience, but I think there are people that appreciate that. And I would say that most of the time, you don't find junior associates actively talking about this and wanting that experience, and I think that a lot of partners would be impressed-

Alison Monahan: I agree.

Sadie Jones: ... with you saying that you feel like you're not quite where you want to be; do they have any suggestions of how you ... you know, is there someone that they can work with? Where do they think that you could learn these skills?



Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think you have to approach it productively, so the conversation may be along the lines of, "Hey, these are some things that I would be interested in doing in the next six months. How can we strategize about ways I can get this type of experience?" Obviously you have to be realistic. If you're in your first year, you can't go and say, "Oh, I want to first chair a deposition in the next six months." They're going to be like, "Okay, that's not happening. Maybe somebody can take you along and you can sit there and hand them papers." You know? That's just kind of how it works. So yeah, you've got to be realistic, but you've also got to be advocating for yourself, because nobody's really going to be advocating for you, is the reality of it.

Sadie Jones: Another opportunity that some associates have at certain firms is to shadow people, and I wouldn't discount that, even if you're just going to be somewhere not doing anything. It's a really good opportunity to see what it's really like, and maybe figure out how you're going to get there, and what are the skills this person is using? What do I need to do to get to that point? And a lot of times, there's a number of hours that are set aside for that, so it's not taking away from your billables. So maybe it's not a ton of hours, but I know that places I've been have had that. So, if you've heard about it, ask how the shadowing works.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. One of the places I worked, every time that we went to trial, which was actually pretty frequent, they brought along a junior person, usually for a couple of days. If you're at trial for two weeks, you might have somebody there for two or three days, somebody else for a couple of days, with the idea that they just kind of pitched in and helped out where they were needed. But really, it was for their professional development. A lot of people have never been to a jury trial. They've never seen a cross-examination. These can be super valuable, even if it means you may have to work a little bit extra later in that week.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I would say that when you're there, make sure you're paying attention and trying to get the most out of it.

Alison Monahan: Right. You don't say "Oh, I'm tired, I'm going to bed, it's 10 PM. We're cool, right?" And everyone's like, "No, we're working until three, so get in here and make some copies." You know?

Sadie Jones: Yeah. Try to be useful, I think is good advice too.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. You want to pitch in and be the person who's getting coffee for people. Maybe you feel it's beneath you after your Ivy League legal education, but that's really what your role is at that point, so suck it up and do it.

Sadie Jones: Could not agree more.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, you'll remember the person who's like, "Oh my gosh, they were so nice. They went out and went out to wherever, the 24 hour restaurant, and brought people food at three in the morning." It's only going to help your career.
- Sadie Jones: Because you're actually helping them.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and you're so grateful. You're just like, "Oh my gosh, we have another set of hands who can do the things that no one else wants to do. This is fantastic."
- Sadie Jones: And so maybe when that person needs to give work to someone who's more junior, they're going to think of you.
- Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.
- Sadie Jones: So I think that's a lot of what this is about.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you want to be that go-to person where they think, "You know, they did a great job getting me coffee at three in the morning. I bet they can handle defending this deposition for this minor thing that no one really cares about. Yeah, sure, why not?" Yeah, so you want to be top of mind. Let's talk about law firms. We talked earlier about how you basically need to be on top of this, but do firms try to help you with this stuff? Are they keeping track of things? Are they paying your bar fees? How does this work?
- Sadie Jones: I think all big firms are paying your bar fees, and they're keeping track of their internal CLEs, like we were talking about with the sign-in sheets and things like that. So, actually, if you went back and needed to get another copy of a certificate from an internal course, it wouldn't be that hard. So I do think you can count on them to do some things. A lot of times, they'll ask you to send them ... when the bar fees come in, the sheet that got sent to you, because it's not going to get sent to the firm. It's going to get sent to you. Again, that part is on you to give them.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Weirdly enough, in California, I think they don't even mail them anymore.
- Sadie Jones: Oh.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, they just kind of stopped mailing them I think last year, and suddenly it was like, "Oh yeah, you just need to log into the website and pay this." And everyone's like, "What?" You know? So you've got to-
- Sadie Jones: Well, then it might be a different system. The point is, though, you need to make sure that it got paid for you-



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you've got to ... Yeah.
- Sadie Jones: ... whether it's getting paid by the firm directly or you're getting reimbursed by the firm. The point is that no matter what, you don't want anything to lapse. If you have to put out the money and get reimbursed, it's more important than it not getting paid.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and you need to be on top of the deadline. I mean, nobody's going to be like, "Oh, well, your HR person didn't tell you that you needed to do this." You're a lawyer. You need to go ahead and mark on your calendar for the next 10 years the due date of these fees, because they're pretty much always the same.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. And the other thing is, if it's a week before the deadline and you all of a sudden look and you need three quarters of your credits done, you can't go to somebody at the firm and say, "Why didn't you tell me?"
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, not their problem.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. And I have a feeling that they probably send out reminders leading up to it, to tell the lawyers, "Check your CLE," that sort of thing. But whether or not they have, it is all on you. It's on you to keep track of all the documentation, and it's also on you to log in and report that you've complied. So, aside from the bar dues being paid, that part where you log in ... Because I've seen a lot of people be confused about that. That is something you do. You cannot have the firm log into your account for you-
- Alison Monahan: Right, or your secretary or whatever.
- Sadie Jones: ... and say that they did it. Or your secretary. That's completely unethical.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, basically you're certifying, "I did this." You've got to sign off on it, basically. And, you know, it's just one of those things you don't want to leave till the last minute. What if the website crashes?
- Sadie Jones: Yes.
- Alison Monahan: All these ridiculous things happen. It's something you really need to deal with over time, and also-
- Sadie Jones: It's way easier to not have to do it at the last minute.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I did it-
- Sadie Jones: I would say calendar that.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I did it one year. I'd only done half of it or something, and I realized maybe a month before. That's a lot of hours spent clicking every six minutes on an online presentation to prove that you're still there, and going to random things that I really didn't have any particular interest in just to get credit. It's not that overwhelming if you just do it over time, but if not, it's going to become really a problem. All right, well, we're about out of time here. What type of professional development mistakes do you see young lawyers consistently making?
- Sadie Jones: Well, one, just on the CLE side, what we talked about; not keeping track of their certificates. That happens just on such a wide basis. And that's across the board, so I would say taking ownership of that part yourself. The other big mistake, I think, is really that they're not keeping track of their professional development from day one. Because these aren't skills that all of a sudden, as a seventh year, you should start to think about. Just one example is networking. I think it's something that you can start from even when you're in law school, because you don't know where your classmates are going to end up. Like, they're going to be in-house. They're going to be a client. They're going to be at the DA's office, and that's where you want to be. So, I would say that [networking](#), to me, is a really big part of your professional development, and it's something that you should do from day one.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, and even conferences, which I mentioned earlier. Often times, students aren't aware of this, but your law school will actually pay for a conference a lot of the time. So, if you see an interesting ABA event or some other type of thing that you're like, "Oh my gosh, that would be so amazing if I was able to go to that," chances are actually pretty high that your school will pay for you to go, so why not take advantage of it?
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think that's a great opportunity.
- Alison Monahan: Because you're going to meet so many people there. I mean, who knows? From all over the place, all over the country. I feel like this is one of those situations where you almost always want to just say yes, even if you're like, "Well, I don't know. It could be intimidating. I don't know anyone." Just go.
- Sadie Jones: And I also think those things where it feels intimidating sometimes are the thing that is going to push your professional development.
- Alison Monahan: Sure.
- Sadie Jones: And going back to what we talked about before, about if someone says, "Do you want to speak on a topic?" Or, "Do you want to do this presentation at law school?" and you're a junior attorney - if it's something you feel like you could do, I would say, why not try?



Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: That pushes you a little bit.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and that's the time in your life when you need to be spending that extra effort and extra time to position yourself as an expert and really become an expert. Later on, if you're 10 years into practice, you're like, "Oh, I could do this presentation off the top of my head." That's probably not the time for you to be doing it. The time for you to be doing it-

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: ... is when you're like, "Oh, I'm really going to have to stretch and learn, and put this stuff together, and improve my public speaking, and it's going to be so hard." Well, that's why you want to do it; because that's going to put you ... again, that's going to level you up. That's going to put you in a position that's better than other people who are like, "Yeah, I don't know. I feel like I have enough work already. Thanks."

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I think no one is going to take ownership of your career for you.

Alison Monahan: No.

Sadie Jones: No one's going to do it for you.

Alison Monahan: No. I mean, they can't, and they won't.

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Basically, if you have a vision for what you want to achieve and where you want to be, it's up to you to execute on that vision.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: All right. Well, with that, we are unfortunately out of time. For more career help and/or the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, check out [CareerDicta.com](https://www.careerdicta.com). If you enjoyed this episode of the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#), please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app, because we would really appreciate it. And be sure to [subscribe](#), so you don't miss anything.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at [Lee@LawSchoolToolbox.com](mailto:Lee@LawSchoolToolbox.com), or [Alison@LawSchoolToolbox.com](mailto:Alison@LawSchoolToolbox.com). Or, you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at [LawSchoolToolbox.com](https://www.LawSchoolToolbox.com). Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon.



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