

Bar Talk

PEOPLE AND PRACTICES

Steeped in employment law

California's myriad employment laws are keeping attorney Richard Simmons busy both from a legal and a publishing standpoint.

Along with practicing employment law at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton in Los Angeles, Simmons is a prolific writer with more than 30 publications, a bi-monthly newsletter and a Web site showcasing his legal writings, www.castlepublications.com.

Both his legal work and writings have taken off in response to the state's employment laws.

"It's not only a heightened interest — the reality is that the wheels have come off the wagon," he said. "The number of lawsuits have proliferated to such an extent that

everyone has not only a curiosity but, from the management and business world, there's paranoia that no one knows what's coming next."

Simmons writes about every new case and regulation that comes down. The writing not only generates business, but it also keeps him on the cutting edge, he said.

"It's somewhat circular — it feeds on itself," he said.

One of the most popular topics is sexual harassment, for which he has developed a sexual harassment training manual and prevention kit. Highly publicized wage and hour cases, such as the recent Wal-Mart verdict, are also increasing interest on that front. His Wage and Hour Manual for California Employers is a consistent best-seller.

Simmons' writing interest stems from

when he was a fledgling attorney, writing for law reviews, journals and bar reviews.

"I always wanted to be the first person to write on the subject," he said.

Now, the work is consuming. Simmons devotes as much time to his writing/speaking career as his full-time attorney responsibilities. With the work skyrocketing on both ends, he acknowledges that he's "fairly consumed," and has to exercise discretion as to what he takes on.

"I am too busy to take cases I don't have interest in," he said. "The lawyers on my team are about to file stress claims because there's so much activity."

— Kellie Schmitt

Sidebar

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