

Bench & Bar of Minnesota **Editorial Policy**

Need for Updated Policy:

From time to time, questions and issues have arisen among MSBA staff and members over the role of *Bench & Bar* as the official publication of the MSBA and its responsibilities to communicate to members the value of MSBA membership and the policy positions of the MSBA. These questions and issues are a sign of a healthy, engaged bar association. In light of these events, the Publications Committee and the Executive Director have determined that it would be beneficial to update the Editorial Policy for *Bench & Bar* and to have the policy approved by the MSBA Council.

Bench & Bar Background:

Bench & Bar of Minnesota (“*Bench & Bar*”) is the official publication of the Minnesota State Bar Association (“MSBA”).

Bench & Bar publishes articles, news and other information that serves to advance the education, competence, ethical practice and public responsibility of Minnesota lawyers. The value of *Bench & Bar* to the MSBA stems, in significant part, from the value the MSBA’s members place on the magazine as a credible source of such information.

Bench & Bar is overseen by its Editor and the MSBA’s Publications Committee (“Committee”). The Editor is responsible, in the first instance, for the content of the magazine. The Editor reports to the Executive Director of the MSBA, or the Executive Director’s designee, and works closely with the Committee regarding the management of the magazine.

Bench & Bar publishes editorial material from a variety of sources, including unsolicited articles and letters submitted by members and the public, and material that has been solicited by the Editor. The Committee, together with the Editor, shall maintain written editorial guidelines applicable to both solicited and unsolicited submissions.

Communicating the Value of the MSBA:

One of the core functions of *Bench & Bar* is to communicate the value of the MSBA to its members. To this end, *Bench & Bar* shall:

- Provide information on MSBA programs and services, including specific MSBA programs and services that relate to information otherwise being published, when possible.
- Publish MSBA advertisements and shall work with sections, committees and other instrumentalities of MSBA to publish special supplements that may be distinguished from submitted editorial content. The cost of producing and distributing MSBA

advertisements and special supplements shall be borne by the program, committee, section or instrumentality making the publication request.

- Include content focused at the nexus between members' professional interests and MSBA activities, as determined by the Editor's review of readership research and other indicators that demonstrate where members find value in the MSBA.

This list is not exhaustive and shall not prevent the Editor, Committee or Executive Director from identifying and implementing other methods of communicating the value of the MSBA to its members through *Bench & Bar*.

Assisting with MSBA Policy Development:

Another core function of *Bench & Bar* is to assist with the MSBA's development, and communication to the members, of policy. In furtherance of this function, *Bench & Bar* shall:

- Provide information to members regarding topics of state-wide professional interest and concern that are or may be under discussion by the MSBA sections or committees that may develop into formal policy statements by the MSBA.
- Solicit engagement of members with respect to such topics when policy statements are under consideration, whether in the first instance or for renewal.
- Once such a policy statement has been adopted by the MSBA Assembly, and upon request of the Executive Director, publish the policy statement and the rationale for its adoption.

This list is not exhaustive and shall not prevent the Editor, Committee or Executive Director from identifying and implementing other methods of assisting with the development of MSBA policies.

Serving as a Forum for Member Discussion:

Bench & Bar also serves as a forum in which discussion of topics of interest to members may occur. Consistent with its mission, *Bench & Bar* may:

- Publish material that otherwise meets the criteria set forth in this Editorial Policy, even though such material may involve controversial subjects or unpopular points of view.
- Provide MSBA members with the opportunity to exchange views regarding, and to offer criticism of, MSBA policy statements that have been adopted, provided that, with respect to policies that are in place and not being reconsidered by the MSBA, such commentary will be published in the form of a Letter to the Editor rather than as an article.

Bench & Bar shall strive to publish material that substantively advances discussions of topics of interest to members and shall seek to avoid publishing material that is merely critical or is based solely on opinion without furthering such discussion.

Resolving Issues and Answering Questions about *Bench & Bar*:

In order to resolve issues and answer questions that may arise, the Editor, Committee and Executive Director shall work together, as necessary, to ensure that *Bench & Bar* continues to fulfill its intended purposes as set forth in this Editorial Policy.

To the extent that issues or questions arise regarding whether the Editor's decisions regarding *Bench & Bar's* content are or have been inconsistent with this Editorial Policy, the MSBA will expect the Committee to have a central role in addressing such questions, along with the Executive Director and, as appropriate, the Council.