

CLE Program Design Strategies

2026-2027 Bar Year



Follow these steps to create a winning CLE program:

Begin 120 Days before the event.

Step 1: Brainstorm Topics.

Look for opportunities in the marketplace based on:

- Your own experience and that of your peers (What do you need? What do you want to learn more about?)
- Articles and current events
- Client stories
- Prior CBA Programs. We have lots of great programs run in prior years that are “on the shelf” and waiting to be reborn with your creative energy.

Step 2: Evaluate your Topic.

In this step you see if your ideas are actually an opportunity for a program.

Consider:

- Has it been done before? If so, when and by whom? (This does not mean you should not do it).
- Who will come? And why? Think about what is in it for them. This is your Target Audience. You must be as specific as possible. If you need help on this we can provide resources on how to identify a target market.
- What competition is there for the topic and/or target market’s attention?
 - Other Bar Associations – are there any similar presentation around the proposed date
 - Other Trade Associations
 - Other educational resources
- How much are others charging for similar programs?
 - Free isn’t always the best strategy to drive attendance. People value what they pay for, even if the charge is minimal.
- Who might you get for speakers?
 - 1 to 3 speakers are optimal (avoid more than 3).
 - Select speakers of diverse backgrounds in accordance with the [CBA Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#)
- Is there a potential for sponsors? Who might they be? (Remember, please talk with CBA Staff before approaching Sponsors).

Step 3: Articulate your Learning Objectives.

This is driven by Step 1 and 2.

A Learning Objective is:

- A statement that specifies what learners will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity. Objectives are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

- Something tangible, measurable, and actionable that the attendees can do or act on as a result of attending the program.
- General awareness, or just “knowing more” isn’t a learning outcome. As a rule: More people come to programs where there are learning objectives. They don’t go to general awareness programs.

Step 4: Plan your Program.

With your Learning Objectives defined, you are ready to plan your program. This includes:

- Marketing Plan: (Title, brief description, bullets on learning objectives)
- Logistics Plan: (Half-Day, Full- Day, when, where and how)
- Budget

Step 5: Finalize Your Program

Submit by email to cle@ctbar.org:

- speaker bios, headshots in high-definition Jpg format and release forms (seminar is usually video recorded) **60 days prior** to the event
- written materials for the seminar no less than 30 days prior to the event. Written materials must be included for a seminar to qualify for NY CLE credit. Each speaker is encouraged to submit materials. Course materials should constitute a comprehensive and professional treatment of the seminar subject matter. Materials may include a detailed outline including citations and explanatory notations, sample pleadings, sample forms, cases, FAQs, and detailed presentation slides. The materials will be distributed electronically to registrants two days before the seminar.

Step 6: Help Promote and Market

The CBA will do its best to promote and market your seminar. We find that **the most effective tool to increase attendance at events is direct outreach from the section chairs, seminar organizers, and the speakers.** We will work with you to get the word out about your event, using your own network and social media tools.