

Recruiters: Helping Lawyers Start Right for Career Success



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**CORDELL
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ABOUT CORDELL PARVIN

Cordell Parvin practiced law for 37 years and developed a highly successful national construction law practice. During his career, Cordell has been a rainmaker and taught, mentored and coached young lawyers on their careers, work-life balance and rainmaking. Cordell was also a Practice Group Leader and worked with other Practice Groups helping them to develop their business plans and strategy.

At Jenkins & Gilchrist, PC, Cordell initiated and directed the firm's Attorney Development Program. He created a comprehensive program for associate development focused on skill development, mentoring, shadowing and career planning. Cordell motivated the leadership of his firm to get behind the associate development program and to focus attention on the importance of career planning.

He has a passion for teaching and coaching young lawyers. He recognizes that each lawyer has unique skills, talents and dreams. He works with lawyers as individuals and seeks to inspire and energize them based on their individual career and life dreams.

Many associates, especially those in large firms, wonder whether it makes any sense to learn about client development and if so, what they should learn.

Law school teaches students how to think like a lawyer. What do associates need to learn that they did not learn in law school?

Graduating from law school, passing the bar and becoming a first year associate are events, becoming a successful associate and lawyer is an achievement.

What are attributes of successful lawyers?

Four Areas of Life

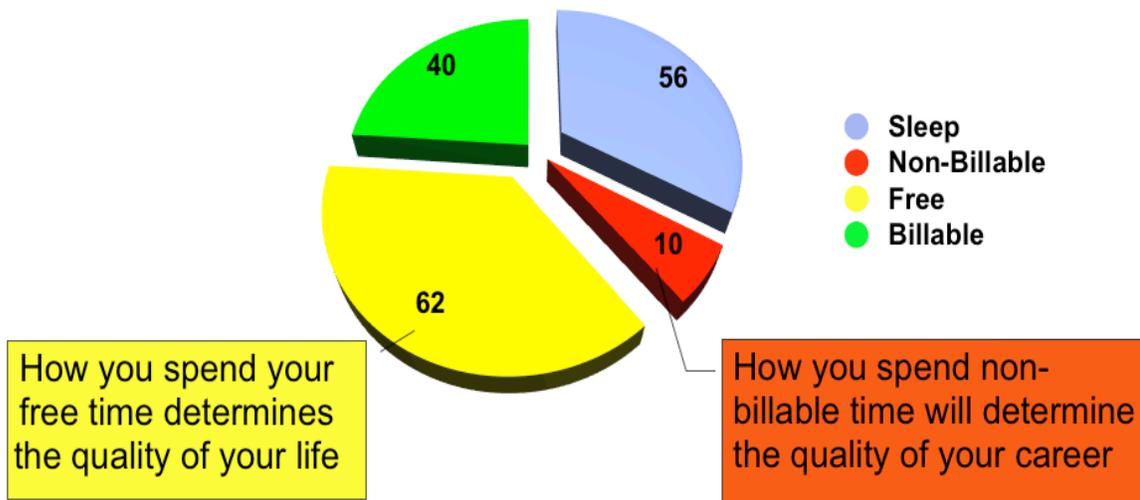
- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____



PLANNING

Your associates must have a plan to build their reputation and relationships most effectively. A plan will help them use their investment time wisely as they prioritize, focus and execute. There are 168 hours in a week and your associates choose how to spend those hours.

How They Spend Their Time Weekly



Teach the Prioritization Matrix

High Return / Low Investment Do first and do often	High Return / High Investment Break down into smaller pieces
Low Return / Low Investment Do when you have time	Low Return / High Investment Say NO graciously!

There is evidence supporting the conclusion that people with written goals and a plan to achieve them are far more likely to be successful. Goals must be specific, measurable, acceptable and realistic.

How to determine goals?

Focus on client service. What are ways they can focus on client service?

Dress for success.

Teaming up with a colleague will help them become more accountable. What are other ways they can hold themselves accountable?

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Career Success and satisfaction does not come from focusing on success, happiness or money. Instead it comes from focusing on your passion, developing your talent and identifying the needs of those you want to serve.

- Cordell M. Parvin

Cordell Parvin Articles for Recruiters

Are You Hiring the Law Students Who Will Succeed?

One year our firm offered jobs to two students. The first was about the smartest young student I had ever met. He was a straight A student. I don't think he ever got a B in anything in his life. I was a little concerned about him because he was so smart he rarely attended class. He didn't stay with us very long and it is difficult for me to picture him or remember his name today.

The second student was a young man who grew up poor, worked very hard to even get into law school and mostly got Bs. He never missed a class and was like a sponge trying to learn more each day. He stayed with us and worked as hard as a lawyer as he had as a student. I still remember Tyler.

I thought of these two law students recently when I spoke to 4th graders on career day at the school where my daughter teaches. The parents of the kids in the school do not have much. They work hard and struggle when things don't go exactly as planned. Many of their kids are like the sponge, anxious to learn every day. In one of the classes I noticed two young girls sitting there taking notes on everything I was telling them.

Seth Godin makes two interesting points in his blog [On Self Determination](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2010/03/on-self-determination.html) (http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2010/03/on-self-determination.html). The second of his two points reminded me of the two law students I hired so many years ago. He talks about the A students who took mainstream courses and did the minimum amount of work they needed to do to get an A. They learn for the test.

Those students who didn't need to work for their A's are joining law firms every day and they are a challenge to supervise. Why you ask? Put simply, they do not see things that are not immediately obvious. They don't dig deeper than the exact assignment. They mess up and do not even understand how they messed up. They also do not take criticism very well. After all, they have been told their entire life how smart they are.

Give me the student who should have gotten C's but worked so hard she got B's. She has the emotional intelligence it takes to be successful and she will see things her all A's classmate misses.

Tell Me About a Time You . . .

According to the October 7, 2009 *ABA Journal* on-line article "Why Law Firm Interviewers Are Asking 'Tell Me About a Time' Questions" law firms are sending more senior people to meet with potential new hires and using behavioral questions to learn more about students' personalities. They are looking at these four behavioral patterns:

1. Decision-making and problem-solving skills
2. Motivation
3. Communication and interpersonal skills
4. Planning and organization

I like questions looking at those behavioral patterns, but I would add two more:

1. Integrity
2. Cooperation, collaboration and teamwork

If Med Schools Look at More than Grades, Why Shouldn't Law Schools and Law Firms?

In July, 2011 an article in *The New York Times* titled “New for Aspiring Doctors, the People Skills Test” described how the medical school at my alma mater, Virginia Tech, screens applicants.

As you will see, they conduct “speed” interviews to determine whether applicants have people skills, how well they think on their feet and how well they work in teams. Aren't those the same skills law firms should determine when hiring first year lawyers and laterals?

We are trying to weed out the students who look great on paper but haven't developed the people or communications skills we think are important,” said Dr. Stephen Workman, the school's associate dean for admissions and administration. “Our school intends to graduate physicians who can communicate with patients and work in teams,” added Dr. Cynda Ann Johnson, the school's dean. “If people do poorly on the M.M.I., they will not be offered positions in our class.”

It costs any law firm a great deal of money to hire a new or lateral lawyer. Doesn't it make sense to look beyond grades to determine which of the candidates will be in the next generation of great lawyers?

What is the Single Most Important Attribute I Look for in Associates?

A human resources director once asked me: “What is the single most important attribute you look for in the associates who work with you?” I responded: “I want associates who have a burning desire (fire in the belly) to learn, become the best lawyer he or she can become and serve clients.” I am blessed to have worked with many associates with that single most important attribute. Now, I have the opportunity to coach associates with that attribute.

The human resources director wanted me to explain how those lawyers differed from other associates. I told him that some young lawyers view what they have as a “job” rather than a

career. I punched a clock in a factory where I worked during college and law school summers. Those young lawyers are still punching a clock. They:

- Think short term, not long term.
- Want to work for a firm where in the short term they can get paid the most for the least amount of work.
- Do not want to learn how to develop business and prefer to just have work handed to them.
- Limit their non-billable learning to whatever the minimum CLE requirements are.
- Sometimes “punch out” and go home even when a needed project is not done.

I wonder why some young lawyers view practicing law as a job not a career. I frequently hear it is a generational thing. I don't think so in part because the very lawyers who say it are in a generation that was criticized when they were young lawyers. I also get to work with highly motivated young lawyers in the same generation.

Did law firms contribute to the “punch clock” worker mentality when they set billable hours requirements? I don't know the answer. I only know that when I started practicing law no one told me I had to bill a certain number of hours. My focus was on my work, not my hours. I did the work that was given to me and asked for more.

What REALLY Motivates Your Associates

The carrot and stick approach with bonuses based on hours billed is not a great motivator. In Daniel Pink's book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Pink points out that the carrot-stick (change or die) approach only works in limited situations when the work is so boring or lacking creativity that it is about the only tool to motivate the workers. I suppose it might work for the lawyer who is stuck in a warehouse reviewing thousands of emails a day to determine whether they are relevant and whether they are privileged. Almost nothing a lawyer does could be more boring. So, rewarding the lawyer by the number of hours he or she puts in might be an appropriate incentive.

Pink believes that intrinsic motivation (joy of living) is what is needed in every other circumstance. He believes that intrinsic motivation comes from **autonomy**, **mastery** and **purpose**. When you have autonomy you feel like you can direct your own life. To have autonomy you must take responsibility for your career success and life fulfillment. Mastery means you are constantly striving to become a better lawyer knowing you will never achieve total mastery. Purpose means you are working on client matters that are meaningful, doing them well and doing your work for a purpose greater than yourself.

Pink tells a story about finding purpose. In 1962, Clare Booth Luce met with President Kennedy about his diffuse priorities. “A great man,” she advised him, “is one sentence.”

President Lincoln's sentence was obvious: "He preserved the union and freed the slaves." So was FDR's: "He lifted us out of a great depression and helped us win a world war." What, Luce challenged President Kennedy, was to be his sentence?

Those are not new concepts. Several years ago I read *Selling with Emotional Intelligence*. Chapter 14 of that book is titled: "Finding Motivators that Last." The essence of the chapter is that successful people are intrinsically motivated because extrinsic material motivation loses its power over time.

So, what would motivate your associates to develop, build and expand relationships with clients? Mitch Anthony lists six categories of lasting intrinsic motivation:

1. **Competitive nature**-it is the desire to become better than competitors.
2. **Desire for excellence**-it is the desire to become the best you can be.
3. **Curiosity and desire to grow**-it is the lifelong desire to continuously learn and become a better lawyer
4. **An attitude of gratitude**-it is appreciating the opportunities we have been given rather than complaining about our circumstances
5. **Desire for building relationships**-it is spending a lifetime doing work and helping people we like.
6. **Noble purpose and goal**-it is the feeling that what you are doing to help clients is noble and helpful.

These concepts have even been discussed in the context of professional services firms. Jay Lorsch and Thomas Tierney in their book, *Aligning the Stars: How to Succeed When Professionals Drive Results*, say that most young professionals want:

- **to learn;**
- **career options;**
- **affiliation and teamwork;**
- **autonomy;** and
- **flexibility** to better balance their professional and personal lives.

Ok, I think you probably can agree that there is clarity on what motivates younger lawyers. The more difficult question is how a firm, and its more senior lawyers can provide it.

Are You Creating the Environment to Help Your Motivated Associates Succeed?

Do you remember the Internet boom in the late 90s when law firms were fighting to attract and retain the most talented young lawyers? In our current economy those days seem like a distant memory. I maintain that young lawyers are as motivated as ever. If you are a law firm

leader, what do you suppose you can do that will create the environment for your motivated young lawyers to succeed?

I am coaching a group of talented and highly motivated associates with a law firm here in Texas. What makes me say they are highly motivated? It starts by simply looking at the business plans they have created. The plans are the product of thought and are specific enough to be an accountability tool. Next, members of this group are out there doing things. One lawyer is making presentations to CPA groups all over the state.

During my career I discovered I could not motivate the unmotivated. I could only encourage those who are motivated. I believe the Texas firm's leaders and its marketing director have created an environment that encourages this group of motivated lawyers, including having them participate in the client development coaching program.

I have found *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era* to be helpful when it comes to leading younger lawyers. Marshall Goldsmith contributed a discussion on Leading New Age Professionals. He says those young professionals want leaders who:

- Encourage their passion
- Enhance their ability
- Value their time
- Build their network
- Support their dreams
- Expand their contribution

Your law firm's associates are likely as motivated as those I am coaching in the Texas firm. How can you provide the environment for them to succeed?

Take a second look at the list above, and then go back and read the ideas from Daniel Pink's book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* and Mitch Anthony's book *Selling with Emotional Intelligence*. Aren't all of the authors reaching the same conclusions about what young professionals want?

If all the experts seem to agree on what young lawyers want, the next step is to simply create that environment in your firm.

How to Create a Preeminent Attorney Development Program

I was interviewed recently using Google + Chat. That was a first for me. I was asked why I left a lucrative and enjoyable law practice to work full time coaching, teaching and helping young lawyers. The interviewer told me his readers would find that crazy on my part. I told him my former partners could not understand why I would make the change. One partner said I was “retiring.” Finally, I told him I loved working with lawyers striving to get better and striving to build a preeminent law firm.

Is your law firm striving to be a preeminent firm? If so, you must create a preeminent attorney development program. But, that is challenging. Are your partners and associates behind your attorney development program, or do the partners undermine it and associates blow it off? Are your firm leaders promoting attorney development or putting it on the back burner?

As a firm leader if you want to increase the odds of getting the lawyers in your firm behind your Attorney Development program, you must take the lead. You should articulate:

- The purpose of the attorney development program is,
- What the firm is trying to accomplish, and
- What is expected of your lawyers.

Here are my ideas to get you started. This is what I hoped to be the purpose, vision and core values of the attorney development program at my old firm.

Our Firm Attorney Development Program

Purpose

The purpose of our Attorney Development Program is to enable our attorneys to better serve our clients, to increase our realization and to provide opportunities for greater achievement and career satisfaction.

Vision

Our firm seeks to have an Attorney Development program recognized as preeminent by our clients, our lawyers and law students.

Core Values

- Our attorneys will take responsibility for their career development and satisfaction.
- Each attorney, associate, partner and of counsel must contribute in some way.
- Supervising lawyers will give clear direction, answer questions, pay attention to quality and provide real time constructive and supportive feedback.
- Teamwork is encouraged at all levels.
- Each attorney and staff member will be shown respect.
- We will endeavor to provide our young lawyers consistent, real and specific direction on career advancement.

- CLE, and other learning opportunities, will be used as a means of acquiring skills necessary to better serve our clients and enable our attorneys to grow.
- We will demand a lot from our lawyers. They will work hard, meet high standards of excellence. Over time and with our guidance and support, our young lawyers will learn to be outstanding lawyers, trusted advisors and mentors for a new generation of outstanding young lawyers.
- Each associate in our firm has a unique background, unique skills and unique dreams, but they also share things in common. They all want to learn and become better lawyers. They want to perform interesting work. They want to feel like they matter, know where they stand and whether they are on track, and they want to feel respected by senior lawyers and peers.

I have to be honest with you. I did not have enough support from our firm leaders to make my purpose, vision and core values a reality in my firm. Do you have the support in your firm?

You will have more fun and success helping other people achieve their goals than you will trying to reach your own goals.

-Dale Carnegie

The Law of the Lawyer

Cordell Parvin

Developing The Next Generation Of Remarkable Lawyers

Are your star associates staying with your firm? Are they learning the skills that make them valuable to your clients? Are your partners behind the effort to train and develop the associates? What are effective ways to train and develop them?

I got the opportunity to answer these questions during a presentation to managing partners at an annual bar association meeting. I loved the title they gave me. It gave me the opportunity to focus on how to connect with the “next generation,” make the business case for developing them, and then give specific ideas on how to do it.

Here are my thoughts on this important topic.

There are likely several reasons that focusing on developing the “next generation” is important. But, I want to address two reasons here. First, Stephen Covey, the famed author and speaker talks about our desire to live, to learn, to love, and to leave a legacy. As law firm leaders we can only leave a legacy if we are developing the next generation of our lawyers to make our firm even more special. Second, when we use the term “next generation,”



we must realize they are unique, special, and differ in many ways from our own generation. Much has been written about the “X” generation and the “Y” generation and how their ideas and values differ from those of us who are baby boomers. I learned this the hard way when I was made the partner in

charge of attorney development. New lawyers want to be part of a law firm that:

- Is honest with them and does not “sugar coat” what it will be like to work at the firm after graduation;
- Has a clear sense of purpose, vision, and core values, and makes clear what each lawyer can do to contribute to the firm’s success;
- Emphasizes the importance of teamwork and recog-

nizes the contribution of even the most junior lawyer;

- Offers challenging assignments;
- Focuses on training and development of its lawyers;
- Models the behavior it expects from associates;
- Provides mentoring and coaching;
- Provides constant feedback rather than just one or two times a year;

Cordell Parvin built a national construction practice during his 36 years practicing law. He works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the author of “Prepare to Win: A Lawyer’s Guide to Rainmaking, Career Success and Life Fulfillment” and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his website, www.cordellparvin.com, or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.

- Has the most up-to-date technology and uses it;
- Appreciates diversity and embraces it;
- Focuses less on hours and more on revenue or profitability; and
- Is a fun place to work.

I love having the word “remarkable” in the title. We could have also said “extraordinary.” Those words convey what kind of lawyers we should be trying to develop. Seth Godin is a marketing guru. A few years ago he wrote the book, *Purple Cow*. The essence of the book and others he has written is that you have to be remarkable to be noticed. The premise of remarkable according to Seth Godin is to have non-compensated third parties become “evangelists” for you and your services. When you have clients and people who refer business to you as evangelists for your firm, you can be very successful. That means we want to teach our lawyers to be leaders in their field, their communities or the Bar because they cannot be remarkable or great following someone else who is remarkable or great.

The Challenge

We live in an interesting and perhaps disturbing time. Studies show us that law students start their first year healthier than the general population of the same age. Before they finish their first year, they have lost ground. By the time they graduate they have clinically elevated anxiety, hostility, depression, and other symptoms three to four times greater than the general population. They are burned out before they start orientation at your firm. A John Hopkins study shows things do not get better. According to the study, lawyers have a depression rate 3.6 times higher than the general population. If you are not concerned yet, consider a RAND survey where only half the lawyers surveyed said they would become lawyers if they had a second chance to decide.

Law Firms Contribute To The Challenge

Young lawyers are looking for more than money and many law firms are not providing it. They want to be part of a firm that is special and one that has a clearly articulated purpose, vision of where the firm is going, a collaborative culture and a clear articulation of how each lawyer needs to contribute to the firm and the firm’s clients’ success. Borrowing some thoughts from Stephen Covey, we are managing knowledge age workers (our young lawyers) with industrial age concepts. We treat our equipment as an asset and our people as an expense. We focus on increasing production and decreasing cost way more than we focus on developing our people. We use the carrot and stick approach, giving bonuses based on billable hours and laying people off who do not have enough billable hours. In large firms, we do not adequately focus on what drives and motivates associates and how we can give them more of it.

Law Schools Are Not

Preparing Young Lawyers

Law school education has really not dramatically changed in the last century. It focuses on cognitive skills and legal theory using the Socratic Method. Law schools brag that they teach students to “think like a lawyer.” That is what I call the “science of law.” It is not the “art of lawyering.” Law schools do not teach students how to practice law or how to think like a client. Law schools do not teach about law firm business or about how to get and keep clients. Law school certainly does not teach how to work with senior lawyers and with the law firm staff. While law schools do not purposely teach it, law schools directly or indirectly convey to the associates that billable hours are the way they will be measured.

Convincing Partners: Making The Business Case

You also have a challenge convincing your partners that developing the next generation of great lawyers makes sense for your firm. Many of your partners believe it makes no sense to spend time and money developing associates because they will leave the firm anyway. Many believe that they are so busy themselves that they have no time to help develop young lawyers. Finally, some of your partners may even undermine your efforts to develop your young lawyers by directly or indirectly conveying to them that they should do the billable work for the partner's client rather than take the time to participate in a program designed to help them become better lawyers.

When I was the partner responsible for attorney development in my firm, I made the business case to my partners. Knowing my partners would need proof of my argument, I offered it from two books. In *Aligning the Stars* authors Jay Lorsch and Thomas Tierney state:

- “Starmaking” is more important to long term success than “rainmaking”;
- The people you pay are more important over time than the people who pay you; and
- Developing a star is a multiyear task.

David Maister produced evidence of these premises in *Practice What You Preach*. Based on his review of the most successful professional service firms, he concluded:

- You must train, energize, and excite your people;
- If you do, the quality of work and service will be increased; and
- If it is, the profitability of the firm will be increased.

So the first part of my business case argument was that we can improve our profits per partner by focusing on training, energizing, and exciting our lawyers about working for our firm.

Next, I turned to a NALP study on why associates leave their law firms. Over 75 percent of the associates surveyed said the primary reason for leaving was the lack of professional development. That percentage rose to 84 percent of the associates who left large firms.

What does it cost when an associate leaves your firm? According to the Project Attorney Retention from American University, the cost is somewhere between \$200,000 and \$500,000 depending on the size of your firm and related factors.

After making the business case, I made the emotional case. Knowing that we baby boomers want to build an extraordinary organization and leave a legacy, I said: “Just suppose...our firm created the preeminent career development program in the country and law students, our lawyers and our clients all recognized it and talked about it...?”

How Do You Develop The Next Generation?

If you want to develop the next generation of great lawyers in your firm, you have to begin by understanding their worldview, perspectives, biases and interests. This is simply the same beginning for building a relationship with clients. Here is what I learned that you can use to improve your program:

- The first thing they ask themselves is: “What’s in this for me?” If they conclude that the firm is just adding another burden to their already busy life, your program will fail;
- Work with the associate leaders on your Associates Committee;
- Convey every way possible that each lawyer is responsible for his or her career success and life fulfillment. The firm can only facilitate and help each lawyer become more successful;
- Focus the program for each lawyer around a career development plan that each lawyer creates to recognize what he or she wants to learn. Each of your young lawyers has unique talents, aspirations, and challenges;

- Teach your lawyers how to set goals and create their career development plan in a career development workshop;
- Teach your lawyers how to manage their time and their work more effectively. I advise young lawyers that I spend approximately 2500 hours billable and un-billable time each year on my career. Most young lawyers think that is way too much until I show them it leaves on average 62 waking hours each week of personal time;
- Teach your partners how to help young lawyers and be a good mentor;
- Include mentoring in your compensation and bonuses for partners;
- Include development based on the development plan in your compensation and bonuses of associates;
- Increase the feedback your partners are giving associates;
- Do not waste their time;
- “Learning by doing” is the best way to develop your lawyers. There is a Chinese proverb that Coach Krzyzewski uses: “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.”
- Encourage “shadowing” and “reverse shadowing” as a way to learn;
- It is important to not limit your development of the next generation to just associates; and
- Include client development as part of your program. Many young lawyers think client development is about marketing, cold calls, and other types of solicitation. As a result they never get started.
- *Orientation.* Expanded orientation including a boot camp for transactional lawyers that was the transactional equivalent of our NITA program for litigators;
- *CLE.* Based on the identified needs in the Development Plan and the Practice Group benchmarks;
- *Mentoring.* We focused the mentoring around the Development Plan. Mentors met quarterly to go over what the associates had done toward achieving their goals identified in the Development Plan. Mentors were encouraged to be the law firm equivalent of fitness coaches;
- *Shadowing.* Associates were encouraged to include shadowing opportunities they desired in their Development Plan. Partners were encouraged to find shadowing opportunities. An issue arose on whether the time shadowing would be counted towards billable hour requirements;
- *Client Point of View.* Each quarter a client representative was invited to speak to all our associates about a particular topic and answer associates’ questions. Our client representatives enjoyed this opportunity;
- *Development.* This included all the soft skills, including writing, speaking, client development, law firm economics, and others skills for which there was no CLE credit;
- *Development Plan.* Prepared each year and used as part of the evaluation process. The template for the Development Plan was on our portal; and
- *Codes to Record Development Time.* While we did not give billable hour credit for development, we did create codes to record the time. We did this in part because we wanted to see if the time was being spent wisely and if the time spent furthered the associate’s goals in his or her Development Plan.

Conclusion: My Approach

I decided our attorney development program for associates should include eight parts, each of which was tied to the associates’ Development Plan. We included:

Cordell Parvin Articles for Young Associates:

Ten Things You Didn't Learn in Law School and Need to Begin Learning Soon

A couple of years ago I spoke to the Texas State Bar Leaders. In that presentation I mentioned things law school doesn't teach and suggested that the State Bar, as well as City and County Bar Associations, should help young lawyers learn those things. In law school, students are taught to "think like a lawyer." They are not taught:

1. To think like a client
2. How to practice law
3. Law as a business
4. How to attract clients
5. What clients want
6. How to retain and expand relationships with clients
7. How to ask clients good questions
8. How to work with senior lawyers and staff
9. How to prepare legal documents
10. How to present their position

Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me When I Was a First Year Lawyer

Recently I saw a blog "18 Things I Wish Someone Told Me When I was 18". It made me think: What do I wish someone had told me when I was a first year lawyer? What do you wish someone had told you?

Here is my current thinking: I wish someone had told me:

1. You may think your education was completed when you finished law school. In truth it has only begun and you are moving into a more important and challenging phase of learning.
2. Passing the bar and later when you make partner are events. Being an outstanding lawyer and outstanding partner are achievements.
3. Find your purpose for being a lawyer, your passion and your core values.
4. Never be content. Always strive to get better.
5. Create a plan each year that includes what you want to learn.
6. Your trusty assistant is a great resource.

7. Treat everyone in your office with respect.
8. Focus as much, or more, on what your clients do as you focus on what you do.
9. Learn to ask good questions and listen intently.
10. Having your own clients is the best security you will ever have.
11. Don't buy into the myth that you are too young to develop business.
12. Also, don't buy into the myth that the only way to develop business is the way some senior lawyer did it. Figure out what will work for you.
13. Make client development and building relationships with clients part of your every day habits. There should be no such thing as random lunches.
14. Build your network of weak ties as broadly as you can and make sure, without coming across as a salesman, that your weak ties know what you do and that you do it well.
15. Make sure your clients know how much you care. Never take a client for granted.
16. Find something you love to do just for your own enjoyment. You will be serving clients, your family and others. You will only do it effectively if you also serve yourself.
17. Don't spend all day, every day, in front of your computer. First, doing so will exhaust you and second, doing so will prevent you from effectively building relationships with your clients, potential clients and referral sources.
18. Figure out what might impact your clients before other lawyers and your clients do.
19. To be successful you will have to learn to lead, delegate and supervise. You can't make rain by yourself.
20. Pay it forward. Always help younger lawyers develop their career, as lawyers have helped you develop yours.
21. Get and stay healthy. Your career is a marathon not a sprint.
22. Figure out your priorities, plan your time and live your life based on those priorities. There is no such thing as balance, but you can focus on your priorities
23. Think BIG and act small. Believe you can achieve great things and work on the small things to get there.
24. Think long-term, act short-term. Figure out where you want to be in five years. Then plan what you will do next month to begin your journey to get there.
25. Plan purposely and think optimistically. Successful people are optimists.
26. Develop your strengths instead of obsessing about your weaknesses.
27. Patience, Persistence and Perseverance. The three P's.
28. If you market to everyone you market to no one. Narrow your target market.

29. When you know the what and the why, the how comes easy. When you know what you want to accomplish and why it is important, you will creatively think of how to do it.
30. Client development is a contact sport. You have to stay in touch with clients, potential clients and referral sources.
31. Having elevator questions planned is at least, if not more, important than having an elevator speech planned.
32. Dress for success. You get only one chance to make a good first impression.
33. Clients want to hire lawyers with "confidence inspiring" personalities. They want to feel confident you will handle their matter.
34. "Cross-serving" is far more effective than "cross-selling" because it focuses on what is in it for the client rather than what is in it for you.

How well you plan and spend your non-billable time will determine the quality of your career and how well you plan and spend your personal time will determine the quality of your life.

Nine Things I Figured Out When I Was a Young Lawyer

I am able to look back now and see how a few things I figured out when I was a young lawyer contributed to my career success and life fulfillment. Let me share those with you in the hope it will enable you to figure out some important things on your own. Here is what I figured out:

1. What I wanted in my career and life. I really gave a lot of thought to what was important to me.
2. What would motivate me and help me stay on track. I found motivation very necessary to get through difficult times.
3. That I had to have a plan to achieve it and stay focused on what was important to me. I discovered I can easily get distracted by unimportant things.
4. What my clients and potential clients wanted and needed. After I developed my legal skills, I spent a great deal of my non-billable time focusing on clients.
5. Different ways I could give them what they wanted and needed. I thought creatively and out of the box.
6. That having the right attitude and not ever giving up were essential.
7. Each of the people who worked for me was unique and different. This was a major breakthrough because for a time I thought what motivated me would motivate each of them.
8. The importance of focusing on my family and to the extent that I could do it, arrange my work schedule to enable me to do things with them that they value.

9. Finally, each and every day, I wanted to try to get better at what I did in my professional life and personal life. I spent an entire career studying successful and fulfilled people and borrowing from each something that would work for me.

Don't Wait - Build Relationships with Seniors

Many young lawyers I meet only focus on relationships with people their own age. Those lawyers tell me their contacts are not in a position to hire or recommend lawyers to the management of their companies. That is only logical, but I wonder why those young lawyers ignore opportunities to build relationships with more senior people they know.

When I was a young lawyer, I never thought I should limit my relationships to people my age. Some of my very best friends, clients and referrals sources were actually my father's and mother's age. A few of them also played a big role in helping me and giving me opportunities.

I was first hired by my largest client after I was recommended by a lawyer who had been on a panel with me presenting to contractors in 1983. I did not remember at the time how lucky I had been to have the opportunity to speak on the panel.

I met Harry Lindberg in 1981 when I did a presentation for the Virginia Road and Transportation Builders Association (VRTBA). At the time Harry worked with the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) and after hearing me speak, he asked that I speak to the national association. That single gesture was likely the most important opportunity I ever received. I spoke to the ARTBA contractors in the summer of 1982 and that led to my speaking again on the panel in 1983.

Harry later became the executive director of the Wisconsin Roadbuilders Association and introduced me to several Wisconsin contractors who became lifelong friends and clients.

I wrote about Harry a couple of years ago in my post "True Stories of Persistence-Part III". Nancy and I loved Harry and his wife Phyllis. They were very close friends and we loved doing road trips with them. We met them during the winter in Palm Springs and in Scottsdale. One summer we went on what we called "Our Great Wisconsin Road Trip." We started in Madison, drove to the far northeast corner of Wisconsin. Then drove across the state to the Apostle Islands. Another year in September Nancy and I flew to Madison and watched the Badgers play on Saturday, then Harry and Phyllis took us to Green Bay and we watched the Packers play on Sunday.

If you are a young lawyer, there is someone older than you like Harry who can be a great friend and who can help you. Don't ignore them, Seek them out.

What Every Lawyer Needs to Know About Motivation, Planning and Accountability

A lawyer I coach sent me an invitation to put in my calendar. No, it wasn't an invitation for lunch or anything like that. When I put it in my calendar, here is what came up on my screen:

Kick me in the rear if you haven't heard from me!!

What did she need a kick in the rear to do? We had an in-person coaching session the week before, during which we went over how she was doing on the 90 Days Goals she had established the last time we had met in person. The first goal she had set was to publish a blog once a week. She shared with me she was in a slump. I told her all of us get in slumps, but she is a potential superstar and superstars get out of slumps. Her invitation to me was her way to work out of the slump.

I wrote about a superstar lawyer working her way out of a slump in my book *Rising Star: The Making of a Rainmaker*. Gina, the main character, had a record year with a big case for one client. She worries about being a "one hit wonder." I know many lawyers like Gina, who get into a slump and want to find a way to get out of it.

If you want to avoid needing a kick in the rear, here is a list of things you need to know about your own motivation, planning and accountability

1. What attributes you share with successful lawyers/people
2. What you want to achieve
3. Why you want to achieve it
4. How to set goals that will motivate you
5. How to prepare a plan to achieve those motivating goals
6. What kind of client development activities will best work for you
7. How to effectively make time for client development
8. What you are doing that is not effective
9. How to be best organized for a more productive day
10. How to get comfortable doing things outside your comfort zone
11. Ways to be accountable to execute your plan
12. How to remain patient and persist when you are not seeing results

Ten Tips for Young Lawyers

When I practiced law I created tips for the associates in our firm. Here are my Top 10 tips:

1. Seek to become a better lawyer every single day.
2. As time goes on, find out what you are really good at doing, what you have a passion about doing, and what clients need.
3. Always remember we are “serving” our clients and understand what that means from their perspective.
4. Always seek feedback from senior attorneys.
5. Improve your active listening skills.
6. Learn to make your points concisely.
7. Before starting any project, make sure you understand what is needed, when it is needed and how long it should take you to do it.
8. Invest your non-billable time wisely using a plan based on your purpose, vision of your career and your goals.
9. Find out the working habits of your bosses and fit within them. (If he, she or they start work early, you should also.)
10. Keep balance in your life. (One way to do so is to identify your responsibilities of husband/wife, father/mother, billing lawyer, learning lawyer, and plan your activities around these responsibilities).

There is really an 11th. Your assistant is one key to your success. She has been around and knows a lot of valuable things. Treat her at least as well as you treat the senior lawyer you are trying to impress, and ask a lot of questions.

Client Development Skills Every Associate Should Be Learning

Here is a list of 15 skills I believe every junior associate should be learning. They should learn how to:

1. Develop good habits-Over the years, the habits they develop will become their activities and their activities will determine their level of success.
2. Take control of their career-When lawyers feel they have control and are responsible for their success, they are more engaged.
3. Set goals and prepare a development plan-People who set goals and have a plan feel more in control of their future.
4. Use non-billable time wisely-Time is a most valuable asset and should be focused on priorities.

5. Dress for success-Clients make snap decisions based on first impressions and clothing is a part of it.
6. Display the appropriate business etiquette-This is another item that will be part of the first impressions.
7. Make senior lawyers raving fans-After all they are the junior associates' clients
8. Effectively network-Effective networking can build word of mouth referrals
9. Remember names-This is the starting point for effective networking
10. Create a good elevator speech and elevator questions-This is the second step in effective networking
11. Develop active listening skills-This is the third step in effective networking and essential for building relationships. They don't teach listening in law school.
12. Create systematic ways to keep in contact with people they know-Staying in touch with contacts should be planned not random lunches when no one else in the office is available. Social media has expanded the ways to stay in touch.
13. Use tools for client development-There are many tools to use including "Google Alerts," Website bios, social media, and others
14. Put themselves in a position to get selected by a potential client-Young lawyers need to know how clients select their lawyers so they can be effective in their client development efforts.
15. Provide what clients want and expect-Understanding results and service from the client's perspective is key to having a satisfied client.

Client Development Myths That Hold Most Associates Back

I have worked with hundreds of associates in my old firm and now as a coach. Many of those associates have bought into what I call client development myths. Have you? Here are the most common myths I see and my response:

1. You either have it (skills to develop business) or you don't. I can tell you from my personal experience that I did not naturally have it. Knowing that drove me to work at it and develop my skills. So, you can learn to successfully attract clients if you are open to ideas and willing to work at it.
2. Just do good work, get a Martindale A-V rating and wait for the phone to ring. I was told that when I was an associate. The problem is there are thousands of lawyers in your city or state who do good work. Client development is a contact sport. It is about building relationships and adding value beyond the good work
3. I'm "too young, and inexperienced to..." You are never too young to start learning client development skills. You may not bring in business right away, but that is ok. This is a marathon not a sprint, you are building towards doing so later. If you wait

until you are a partner to start making the efforts, you may have the same learning curve.

4. You have to be an extrovert and know how to work a room. I know lawyers who are very outgoing and do poorly because they talk about themselves and do not listen. I know introverted lawyers who ask great questions and listen who do very well.
5. You have to “ask” for business. Some lawyers are good at asking for business. Others who ask come across as needy or greedy. I, personally, was uncomfortable asking so I tried to be the “go to” lawyer who would be sought by clients in my target market.
6. Associates in big firms do not need to learn client development. At the very least, associates in big firms with institutional clients need to learn about those clients and find ways to become more valuable to those clients. In the current economy institutional clients are no longer loyal and they are looking more for value in their outside legal expenditure. As a result, learning the skills to get new clients is more important today than before.

How to Get the Most from a Mentor

A young associate recently asked me how to get the most from a mentor. As I write in my book “Prepare to Win,” most lawyers my age owe a great deal of our success to mentors we have had throughout our career. When we were young lawyers we never used the term “mentor,” but we received mentoring advice every day.

If you are a young lawyer, you will likely achieve more and be more satisfied with your career if you work with a mentor, or several mentors. The first step is to find the right person. If you are in a firm, you can easily determine which senior lawyers in the firm most enjoy helping young lawyers. Your mentor doesn't necessarily have to be in your firm. She could be a lawyer you met at a Bar meeting. Many Bar Associations, including the Dallas Bar Association have mentoring programs for young lawyers.

Once you establish the relationship, the best way to get the most from the mentoring relationship is to convey to your mentor that you want to become the best lawyer you can be and you are open to his coaching. Some of the best mentoring relationships are informal with little structure. A senior lawyer will be more inclined to help you when he knows you are taking responsibility for your career. You can demonstrate that by knowing what you want to achieve, developing a plan with goals and taking steps to execute what you have in your plan. Share your plan with your mentor and ask for feedback.

Mentoring from Mentees' Perspective

Many lawyers are not well suited to be mentors. So if you get to choose your mentor, determine who would be a good one. I have always had more than one mentor. I may have a

mentor for substantive legal work, a different mentor for client development and a different mentor for life questions.

Most lawyers who are senior to you frankly love to talk about themselves and their successes. So I think you can attract the attention of a mentor without damaging your image by how you ask the question. “When you were at my stage in your career and... came up, what did you do?” “ I know you became very successful with..., I would love to hear how you did it.” I also recommend you have some ideas of your own so you might say: “I am dealing with...I have given thought to what to do and I think I want to... What do you think of my approach?”

Mentors actually do have signs, but they are not on the door. Good mentors are generally interested in people and show it. They are generally outgoing. They love to teach. They take time to explain things.

There is a very interesting 1993 Study referenced in “In the Blink of an Eye: Estimates of Teacher Effectiveness from a 24-second Thin-Slice of Behavior”. Researchers had a group of students look at professors teaching for six seconds with no sound and then rate the professors. The researchers were fairly surprised that the ratings almost matched those of students who had been in the classes all semester. If students can tell in six seconds with no sound who the better professors are then I know you can tell who would be the best mentors.

I think the best way for a mentee to develop a meaningful mentoring relationship is to have the fire in the belly to be the best he or she can be. During my career I loved to mentor young lawyers who were striving to learn and become a better lawyer. So, convey you have the desire to be coached and get feedback and take interest in the mentor as a person as well as a lawyer. Do you know his or her spouse’s name, children’s names, where the children go to school and so forth?

Mentors have made a big difference in my career and they will in your career also.

A Member Asked:

Q. In your experience, have you found standardized professional development curricula beneficial? In particular regarding programming for first years (e.g. legal research and writing workshops).

A. I have never favored standardized professional development curricula to be the best, but the two areas you mentioned lend themselves to standardized curricula.

Q. What are your thoughts on surveying incoming first year associates prior to their arrival to find out what programs are of interest/importance to them?

A. First year associates are not equipped to know what kind of programs are of interest/importance to them. I read that Steve Jobs and Apple never surveyed customers about new products because they believed the customers could not envision an iPhone or iPad. I believe the same is true for first year lawyers.

Q. If you think a survey would be advantageous, do you think personalizing curricula would be a worthwhile endeavor?

A. Personalizing is always helpful. When you personalize it, they take greater responsibility and feel they have more control.

Q. Have you found general programs (i.e. soft skills – business development, leadership, firm economics, etc.) helpful, and how would you rate the usefulness of these programs compared to, for example, practice area-specific programs (e.g. "Career Milestones for Construction Lawyers")?

A. Soft skills are absolutely essential. You likely have heard it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert. If an associate bills 2000 hours a year in a practice area they may over 5 years become an expert. But, being a lawyer is as much about people skills, speaking etc. Where are they getting their 10,000 hours for that skill? I have written about this: <http://www.cordellblog.com/client-development/the-secret-to-developing-the-next-generation-of-rainmakers/>
<http://www.cordellblog.com/client-development/client-development-how-much-time-are-you-spending-on/>

I would do both because as I said to be successful a lawyer needs practice area skills capital and people skills capita.

Q. How can we add more value for our Junior Associates?

A. Help them develop the right habits and execute to be successful.

Q. How can Junior Associates be more valuable?

A. They need to know what it takes to be successful, have a plan, implement the plan and create the habits that will enable them to succeed. They should also use their expertise with technology to learn more about their clients and what might be impacting those clients.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR NEW ASSOCIATES START RIGHT FOR SUCCESS

1. Help them create a development plan based on their strengths (I suggest they all take SrengthsFinder 2.0 to figure out their top 5 strengths.)
2. Help them create short term written goals. I suggest no longer than 90 days (each quarter).
3. Teach them how to manage their time most effectively. It is not like money, you don't spend time. It happens whether you are using it wisely or not.
4. In addition to encouraging them to do great work, share with them that at the beginning their senior lawyer is their client.
5. Start developing their profile and relationships right from the beginning.

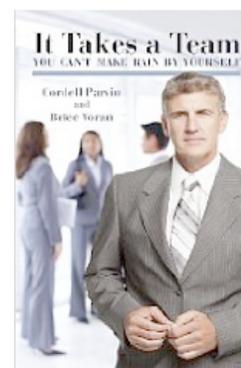
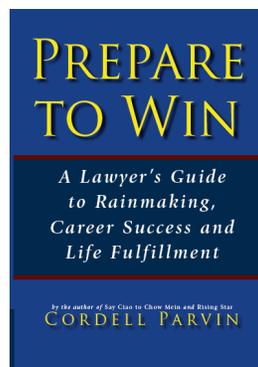
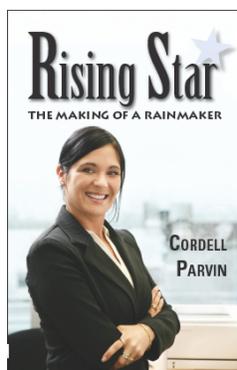
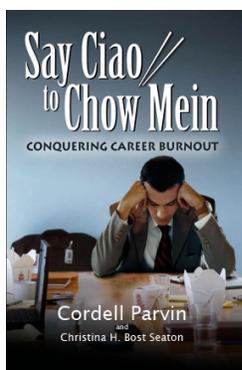
RECOMMENDED READING

Young Lawyers and Summer Associates

- “Power Questions” by Andy Sobel & Jerold Panas
- “The Trusted Advisor” by David Maister, Charles Green & Robert M. Galford
- “Never Eat Alone” by Keith Ferrazzi
- “A Whole New Mind” by Daniel H. Pink
- “Getting Things Done” by David Allen
- “Goals” by Brian Tracy
- “Nine Things Successful People Do Differently” by Heidi Grant Halverson
- “Succeed: How We Can Reach Our Goals” by Heidi Grant Halverson

Recruiters

- “Aligning the Stars” by Jay Lorsch & Thomas Tierney
- “Drive” by David H. Pink
- “It Takes a Team” by Cordell Parvin and Brice Voran
- “Emotional Intelligence” by Daniel Goleman
- “Emotional Intelligence at Work” by Hendrie Weisinger, Ph.D.
- “StrengthsFinder 2.0” by Tom Rath



Available at: <http://cordellparvin.com>