



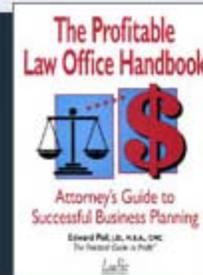
Week of **January 19, 2010**

Build a Solid Foundation on Your Firm's Staff

Lawyers come and go at large and mid-size law firms, but staff, and especially senior staff members, serves as the foundation on which a law firm can build for the future. Yes, there have been staff layoffs and administrator terminations, but no law firm can successfully meet the challenges of recession and a changing profession without the help of staff leaders who embody the multidisciplinary skills that the new professional dynamics of law firms demand.

Those in non-lawyer positions - administrators and administrative professionals at all levels - traditionally have been considered to have little or no direct influence on the outcome of firm revenue and expenses. Yet in the current law firm world, everyone, lawyers and staff, has a stake in the firm's success. Everyone who works in and for law firms must understand that today's conditions are different than past downturns. More than recession alone, firms are contending with basic changes in the way law is practiced. Administrative staff members who understand and can take a strategic perspective about the forces shaping law firms and their future have a much better chance of being perceived by the lawyers they work for as valued colleagues rather than technicians who do not realize the challenges impacting firms today.

Staff and administrators can refocus the firm's direction to cope with ongoing change in many ways. They can, for example, identify technology for cost savings (such as in structuring new or more effective KM and CRM - knowledge management and client resource/relations management - systems), take client service education classes and bring the lessons learned back to the office, or play a role in client service teams that make the practice more efficient and more effective. They can facilitate client communication, because administrators and staff have involvement with and oversight of so many



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communications channels - from returning phone calls, to sending out and following up on invoices, to scheduling client visits and meetings, among others.

The staff professional in any area of responsibility can take a strategic position as the impartial facilitator who has only the success of the firm at heart. Such a role will not, if properly communicated, take billable hours from anyone. The staff person has no axe to grind, is only interested in what's best for the entire firm, and has a unique capability, especially at the senior level, to be the resource, the go-to person, the guide. To be successful at that role requires an official commitment by firm leadership to the staff person's role and responsibilities. With such a commitment, staff persons no longer just respond to what the lawyers say - they become part of an active process of understanding and doing what ought to be done to provide the firm with real value.

Personal Commentary

LawBiz® Management's goal is to provide information and practice management tools that will enable you to be more effective, efficient, and profitable. Therefore, we ask you to answer a few survey questions that should not take more than 2 minutes of your time. For those of you who respond, thank you! By responding, you will be entitled to one of the following:

- *Special Report: Business Competency for Lawyers* (electronic edition)
- *Special Report: The Lawyer/Banker Relationship* (electronic edition)
- 1/2 hour private telephone coaching session with Ed

To take the survey, please [visit this link](#), which will be active until 5 PM, Pacific Standard Time, on Tuesday, January 19, 2010. Thank you for your continued support of LawBiz® Management!

Best wishes,

Ed Poll

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What Readers Are Saying...

Keynote speech is the "highlight" of Bar Association training seminar

"Ed's presentation, in my opinion, was the highlight of this series of speakers. I found the information which was presented to be tremendously valuable. Further, it was presented in a format which was both usable and interesting. Since Ed's presentation, I have had an opportunity to speak with several others who were in attendance and it is clear from them that he made our event successful."

-David R. Hagen, San Fernando Valley
Bar Association

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