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LawBiz® TIPS – Week of March 1, 2011

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Today, I reflect on this last week at Cycling Camp. One of my grandchildren asked my wife, "Grammie, why is Papa at camp? I thought that was only for kids?" This camp is for cyclists who take the sport seriously, but are still recreational riders with careers, families and "a life" beyond cycling.

The camp, owned and operated by Chris Carmichael, former coach of Lance Armstrong, is an example of outstanding customer service. For example, on Saturday, Buellton experience both rain and record cold temperatures. After a week of riding, and feeling very good about my training fitness, I decided to stay back and not ride with the group in the morning. I had intended to ride a little later at a slower pace and in warmer temperature. One of the coaches came to me and said, "Ed, this is our camp. We'll ride the way you want. Wait until we come back with the group, and a coach and mechanic will go out with you for several hours." Wow! This is customer service, personalized!

I've learned a great deal about the business world from my cycling activities over the years ... This is just one more example. To follow this up, however, is the lesson that this attitude must start from the top! It's because this is how Chris Carmichael thinks that he's able to hire coaches who emulate his attitude.

Years ago, when SAS Airlines came out of bankruptcy, with a new CEO, he said that his agents at the counter, where the customer first appeared, would have the power and authority to solve passengers' problems. What a concept! The whole airline experience just got better ... and the profits of the company improved. From personal experience with Southwest Airlines, they think the same way.

How are you treating your staff and clients? Are they the "rock stars" of your world? They should be.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ed".

In this issue:

[Defining Success in 2011](#)

[Growing Your Law Practice in Tough Times](#)

Featured Video:



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What Readers Are Saying:

"No matter how you slice it, there is no substitute for wisdom and experience. Ed

## Defining Success in 2011

The motivation for making New Year's resolutions is still fresh enough to justify taking stock of where you are and where you want to go in 2011. Every lawyer doubtless wants to have a successful year, but those who don't have the right perspective can see their striving for success become counterproductive. Success is not just more billable hours – the real motivation comes from loving what we do, from wanting to help people and from needing to take care of our families and ourselves. So, how to define success for 2011 in this context? The answer lies in moving your professional life down as many of these paths as possible.

- Do what you love. Passionate, satisfied attorneys perform better, deliver higher quality legal services and get better results for their clients. Attorneys who are not happy need to refocus.
- Treat every client like your only client. Clients are primarily concerned about the commitment of their attorney to their matter and their relationship with their attorney. Grateful and appreciative clients will always be there when this attitude is genuinely felt.
- Think like an owner, taking responsibility for everything that occurs in the firm's day-to-day operation. That is the best way to keep clients happy, and to keep the firm strong.
- Be a problem-solver. Instead of just reacting, look ahead for solutions. Too many good attorneys are so busy with immediate concerns that they cannot look forward for ways to solve future problems.
- Never stop learning. Successful attorneys always continue their education and take more than the minimum CLE requirements. It is impossible to know everything in any one field of endeavor, but you should continue to learn new trends and update old thinking.
- Develop business competency. It's important to speak the language of business clients, not offer just shallow chit-chat about the family or golf. Advice from a lawyer who knows the client's business and industry builds the client's trust and confidence.
- Treat colleagues as clients and integrate your practice with others in the firm. Your own colleagues and their relationships with the outside world are an outstanding and underused source of new business, and working to expand them gives others a stake in your success.
- Make yourself invaluable by going the extra mile and

Poll has demonstrated both in this eyeopening book about the essential elements of running a profitable law practice. He provides practical wisdom along with simple ways to adopt and incorporate best practices for each. After explaining the pros and cons of every decision, he makes recommendations and provides useful guides disguised as key principles. Buy the book so you too can access Ed's wisdom and experience. It's worth much more than the investment."

**STEWART L. LEVINE. ESQ.**

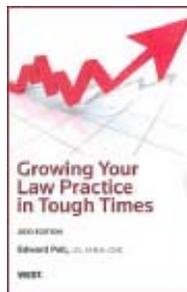
Founder, Resolutionworks  
Author, *Getting to Resolution;*  
*The Book of Agreement and*  
*Collaboration 2.0*

identifying clients' future needs. Suggest articles or webinars on new business trends and don't charge for it. When you become truly invaluable to a client, you will always compete successfully for their business.

A final thought is implicit in traveling each path. Treat everyone – clients, colleagues and vendors alike – with the same civility and respect you wish to receive. The truly successful person never has to worry about the comments made by others when out of earshot.

## Growing Your Law Practice in Tough Times

Following the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and facing a sea change in clients' demands and expectations, law firms must respond and adapt quickly and effectively. Law firms must choose the kind of law practice they will be; the marketing and business development tactics they will use; the overhead that is critical to their functioning; how to price, bill and collect for services; and how to manage the cash flow cycle.



Success lies in identifying and capturing the right kinds of clients, providing the services those clients need in ways that add value, and ensuring prompt payment and the ability to grow profits. This book, based on the experiences of Ed and his clients over 20 years of coaching and consulting, provides the keys to successfully thriving in the new era.

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## Ed Poll, LawBiz® Management

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LawBiz® Management  
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Venice, California 90291-4619  
[www.lawbiz.com](http://www.lawbiz.com)  
[edpoll@LawBiz.com](mailto:edpoll@LawBiz.com)

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