

5 Ways to Deal with Overnight Success

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Have a Strategic Plan in Place for the Big Day



Overnight success is not for the faint of heart. Sure, it may be a dream come true for most lawyers but, if you're not prepared for it, you and your firm can fall into a downward spiral.

Even though every law firm should have a **strategic plan in place** before the big day arrives, most small firms are so busy trying to stay afloat that planning usually gets put on the back burner.

Here are five tips to help you think fast and react quickly to overnight success.

1. Map out a strategy.

Make a to-do list, crunch the numbers and marshal your human resources. It's always easier to fight a battle on paper (or a computer spreadsheet) than to shoot first and ask questions later. No

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matter how much pressure you're getting from your clients for services right now, you need to take the time to sit down with your partners or staff to map out a plan of attack. As a service company, you will have to estimate how many lawyers and administrative staff will be needed to service the expected influx of new accounts.

2. Reach out for help.

If you think you can do it alone, think again. No matter how hard you work, there are only 24 hours in a day and you've got to sleep during seven or eight of them. That's why it's important to reach out to people who can help you.

Ask the staff in your firm to put in extra hours to help you get over the hump. If you're a solo attorney, you can reach out to friends and family members to help you or, if they don't have the skills you need, you can post ads on Web sites to find skilled freelancers and independent contractors.

3. Communicate with clients.

Communication is the lifeblood of any business relationship, but it's even more important when your service suddenly takes off. The biggest mistake a law firm can make is failing to warn clients of delays until it's too late. Stay on top of your deadlines - even if the phone is ringing off the hook.

4. Invest for the future.

While it may be tempting to reap the profits right away, it's important to re-invest some of those profits to help your firm grow. Whether this means paying down debt, buying new technology, or hiring another attorney, don't pass up this opportunity to make your money work for you. It's always cheaper to put your own cash to work in your business than to borrow money from a bank or give up equity to an investor.

5. Re-group and breathe.

After the excitement of the initial rush has died down, take a few hours to sit down with your staff to figure out what went right, what went wrong and what you think you could do better in the future. This will help you put a strategy in place for the next time you find the world beating a path to your door - which could be sooner than you think!

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