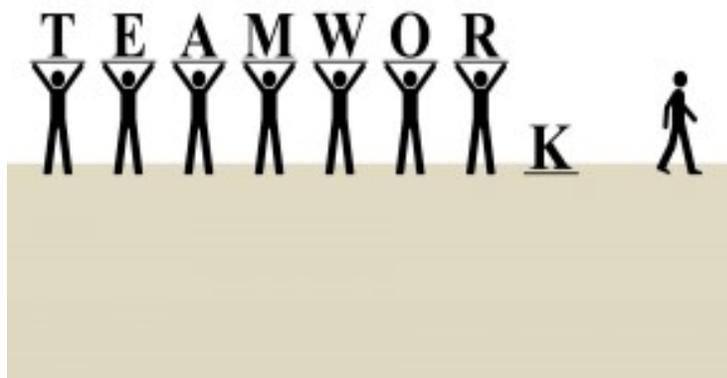


[You Won't Build a Team Doing This](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on September 23rd, 2013

Is teamwork one of your law firm's core values? It was one of my old law firm's stated core values. It was even the theme of one of our firm's retreats. I wish I had saved the shirt and the hat from that retreat so I could show you.

There was at least one slight problem with the teamwork core value idea. No one in the firm ever defined what teamwork meant. Firm leaders never shared their vision of what the firm could become if we worked as a team.



The firm never compensated any lawyers for their “teamwork.” There was no discussion of teamwork in any partner evaluation. No lawyer was ever publicly recognized and patted on the back for being a “team player.”

On the other hand, lawyers in the firm had a clear idea of what “development credit” was and it had nothing to do with teamwork. Firm leaders did share a vision of what the firm could become if we brought in more business.

Each lawyer in the firm knew that the major component of their compensation was the amount of their “development credit.” Each year I was recognized for my amount of development credit and received, among other things, a really fancy pen.

It seems the firm talked about teamwork, but when the rubber met the road, it was all about development credit.

You can't build a team in your firm by just "talking the talk."

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.