# Motivation: Why Your Firm May Be Failing to Motivate Your Young Lawyers

By Cordell Parvin on October 17th, 2013

Lawyers in their firm are not as motivated as they should be. I tell those senior lawyers that their firm is likely causing, or at least contributing, to the problem.

Do you have 11 minutes, actually 10:48 to be more precise? If you have that time, watch this animation of a Daniel Pink presentation on points from his book: Drive.

## RSA Animate - Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us

When I am coaching lawyers, I find that most of them are not motivated by money.  In the video you will find that the science supports that point.

In the presentation, Daniel Pink suggests that employers (law firms) should pay their employees (lawyers and professional staff) enough money so that is not an issue. I agree and I believe most law firms do pay young lawyers and professional staff reasonably well.

I believe law firms make a mistake when, after setting a reasonable salary, they continue to try and motivate their young lawyers and professional staff with more money. It really doesn't motivate them, or at least only motivates a small minority of young lawyers.

As you will see in the video, and in Daniel Pink's book, after you have set a decent salary, these three things will motivate your young lawyers and professional staff.

1. Autonomy
2. Mastery

3. Purpose

If you want some scientific research to support this conclusion, read: Two-factor theory, discussing well documented research done by Frederick Herzberg. As you will see, money is not a motivator, but the lack of it can be a de-motivator.

Unfortunately, many law firms spend more time, and more money, focused on financial rewards as a motivator. In comparison to financial rewards, what is your firm doing to help your young lawyers become more autonomous? What is your firm doing to help your young lawyers become the best they can become? What is your firm doing to provide a meaningful purpose for your young lawyers and professional staff?

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkens & 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.