

[Success: Plan Your Career As If It Is More Important Than Your Vacation](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 16th, 2014

How much time are you spending planning your career? How much time are you spending planning your 2015 vacation?

I remember meeting with Lisa, a young partner in my old law firm, She wanted career planning advice from me. I learned Lisa had some ideas about what she wanted to do, but had not written any goals or a plan to achieve what she wanted.

When Lisa described what she wanted, her description was fuzzy and ambiguous. I wanted to suggest she would never achieve her career dreams without clearly defining what they are, and developing written goals and a plan. I bit my tongue and decided I would get to know her better.

I learned she had recently returned from a long planned bicycling vacation in China. She described in detail what she had done each day and the places she visited. She provided vivid details of what she had seen and photographed and the culture she had experienced. I learned she was passionate about cycling and loved to do it in foreign lands.



After listening for several minutes I began asking questions. I learned Lisa had begun planning her trip almost two years earlier. When she began planning Lisa could describe in detail why she wanted to visit China and bicycle, but other than wanting to see the Great Wall and Beijing, she had no specific ideas. She did extensive on-line research, bought a couple of books and spoke with travel agents.

Based on her research, she found the “Bike China” tour that included Beijing and the Great Wall as well as many other places she wanted to visit and the tour that appeared to best meet her needs. She decided when she wanted to go and planned her airline itinerary. She described in detail her thoughts before the trip and I learned she had actually visualized many of the places she would visit and things she wanted to do on the trip.

I then asked Lisa how much time she thought she had spent planning her China vacation. She told me she thought she had spent at least 40 hours researching and planning her trip.

I thought I had an opening. I simply asked if she would be willing to spend the same amount of time planning her career. I also asked if she would be willing to try and establish goals that were as specific as the ones she had for her China trip and she would approach accomplishing them with the same energy and passion she had for her vacation.

Isn't it ironic that many lawyers spend more time and energy planning their vacation than they do planning their career? Isn't it also ironic that when asked, they can clearly explain why they want to go to a particular vacation spot, what they plan to do while there and what they need to do to get ready for the trip?

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.

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS