

## [Practice Group/Office Leaders: Do you have a plan?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 10th, 2014

Recently a lawyer shared with me that he was struggling to get the lawyers in his practice group to follow his vision. I understand the problem.



I was reminded as a practice group leader what I had learned long before, I could not force, push or even encourage lawyers who did not share my vision to follow me. What is the expression?

Leading lawyers is like herding cats.

I finally decided to create a plan and see if I could help even the most uncooperative lawyers in my group. Recently I was looking in some folders and found my plan and I thought I would share it with you.

### **CORDELL PARVIN PGL ACTION PLAN**

- Meet one-on-one with each of the lawyers in the Practice Group and get their career goals and objectives.
- Establish credibility with each of the lawyers in Practice Group. Determine what motivates them, ask what they are working on and how I can help them.

- Reduce billable hours by 200 annually and develop plan on using the 200 hours for leadership of the Practice Group..
- Identify roles, use weekly planners to plan activities.
- Establish performance criteria with members of the Practice Group. Get each member to agree on goals and an action plan. Provide on-going feedback as I spot the need on performance and suggestions for improvement. Look at all of each person's accomplishments, and express appreciation before raising the bar.
- Meet with each member of Practice Group to find out which work in the past year he or she found most rewarding and why. Also find out which career tracts would provide greatest satisfaction. Have them list three actions they can take in short term.
- Determine strengths, weaknesses, aspirations and fears of each member of the Practice Group. (Write them down and remember.)

As you can see, in my plan I was trying to take the emphasis off of what I wanted to do and put it on what each lawyer in my group wanted to do. How did it work? All I can say is that it was more effective than what I had previously done. You see, for something like Practice Group Leadership to really be effective, you have to do what [Jim Collins](#) suggested in the video: [The "First Who" Concept](#).

I am not going to figure out where to drive the bus until I get the right people off the bus.

**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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).