

# Leaders need training too

---

Don't go into 2017 without considering the adequacy of leadership within your firm. Quality leadership is essential to the management of a successful law practice. Firm culture starts from the top and trickles down to associates and support staff members. Partners and managing attorneys must operate in a manner that promotes efficient, knowledgeable and quality legal services. The actions and attitudes of these individuals can elevate the firm, or bring it crashing to the ground. So, it's important to provide them with the best tools for proper leadership.

Law practice failures can usually be traced, at least in part, to leadership failures. After all, partners and managers are ultimately responsible for the accomplishments and shortcomings of the firm. Even in an environment where associates perform with little supervision, there must be a clear leadership presence.

As an attorney, you likely spent numerous years honing your legal skills and knowledge. Obviously, you recognize the value in training for your practice, but many lawyers fail to recognize the value in training for leadership roles. The role of partner or managing attorney entails a lot of responsibility. Why not provide your leaders with the training they need to perform their jobs well?

## Developing a training plan

- **Internal or external** – There is no single solution for your law firm's training plan. You may choose to establish an internal program or seek assistance from an outside organization. If you decide to outsource this task, just ensure that you are utilizing an agency that understands the complexities of a legal practice.
- **Curriculum development** – Here's where you determine what your leaders will ultimately learn from the training. Some common training topics include:

- Motivational tactics
- Financial management
- Practice growth
- Operational procedures

When deciding what training to provide, consider current gaps in leadership, along with the firm's future goals. This information will help guide you towards the best decision for the practice.

- **Cultivating future leaders** – Your training strategies should also include consideration of the firm's future. Identify potential leaders in your firm and provide them with training opportunities now in preparation for their future leadership roles. This saves time and money down the line, while proactively planning for the firm's longevity.

Each of these training decisions requires an honest view of your firm's current leadership and how well they are performing. Even if there are no apparent problems, a training program is useful as a prevention method. A successful law practice is about more than just the practice. It also requires adequate management and an eye towards growth. Plant the necessary leadership seeds by implementing an effective leadership training program.

---

#### **About Erika Winston:**

*Erika Winston is a Virginia based writer with a passion for all things legal. As a former domestic relations attorney, she understands the challenge of determining the best fee structure for your practice. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.*