

Beating the Odds: Success Strategies for Women in the Legal Profession

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Introduction

...ambition itself is a brave choice for women ... To think the thought, much less say the words, "I want to be great," is an ultimate act of courage.
Linda Austin, M.D., *What's Holding You Back?*

Former Attorney General Janet Reno, speaking at a California Women Lawyers' dinner at the California State Bar meeting in September 2001, recalled that while at Harvard Law School in the early 1960's, the dean asked what she planned to do with her degree, as if unsure what a woman could accomplish with this credential. At that time, it was unusual for women to attend law school, and even more unlikely for them to actually practice law. It was inconceivable that a woman could become the Attorney General of the United States. Reno recounted that just after her confirmation as Attorney General in 1992, she reminded the dean of that previous conversation, much to his chagrin.

The former managing partner at a major law firm in San Francisco reminisced about a moment early in her career, more than 20 years ago, when she was appearing in the courtroom of a recently appointed female federal judge. The judge took a moment to pause and point out that all those with a role in her courtroom for that motion were women: the clerk, deputy, law clerks, court reporters and both attorneys. This was remarkable because just a few years earlier, most or all of these representatives would have been male.

The stories illustrate the tremendous strides women have made in the legal profession and the workplace at large. Nonetheless, women remain vastly under-represented at the top level of law firms and major corporations. Numerous studies on gender bias in the legal profession have uncovered the issues, barriers and challenges facing women.

In spite of the obstacles, some women do reach the top levels. The focus of this article is to spotlight the conditions, best practices and solutions that foster women's success.

Methodology

As a behavioral scientist and management consultant, I sought to discover what distinguishes women who reach the highest levels in legal firms. The Ruben Consulting Group conducted an extensive review of topical literature on gender issues in the legal profession. We then interviewed more than two dozen lawyers, including female senior and managing partners, male senior partners, and female associates with fewer than 10 years of experience.

We used an “appreciative” approach in the interviews. This is a fairly new and highly effective organizational change methodology that focuses on discovering what works and how it can be more broadly applied. More traditional approaches focus on problems, or what doesn’t work. The appreciative approach uncovers challenges and issues but with a different lens. Instead of simply identifying the issues and challenges female attorneys face, we concentrated on the practices and solutions that succeed in overcoming those obstacles.

Results of Literature Search

The literature research can be summarized as follows:

- Women professionals have made significant progress in the past 30 years.
- There is still a long way to go in terms of true equality at the highest levels.
- There are significant obstacles, yet a small percentage of women do reach “the top.”

The literature did not pinpoint factors that distinguished high-level female attorneys from the rest. This lack of specific information on practices and solutions was the primary reason for conducting interviews.

*Some Statistics**

The following data are from a study conducted by Deborah Rhode and commissioned by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 2000. While women account for more than half of those entering the legal profession, the data confirm that only a small minority of these women makes it to the very highest levels.

Percentage of Law Students Who Are Women

Year	Women as % of law students
Currently	51-52%
1999-2000	47.5%
1986-1987	40.7%
1976-1977	26.1%

The study shows that 28.1%, or about one-third, of lawyers nationally are women. Of all lawyers, only 15% of federal judges are women, 15% are firm partners, and

10% are law school deans. Only 5% of equity or managing partners of large firms are women.

The under-representation of female lawyers at the level of partner or managing partner fits trends in the general workforce. Women are also poorly represented at the highest levels of corporations. A 2000 Catalyst study indicated that only 2% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women. The ABA study also points out that there is a higher representation of women in government positions and general counsel offices of corporations than in private sector law firms. Rhode's research indicates that women choose these options because they feel more welcome in these posts or because they can take advantage of more flexible schedules.

Only 3% of women lawyers are people of color. These women reported inequalities in pay and promotional opportunities. Rhode's research indicated that women in the legal profession make an average of \$20,000 a year less than their male counterparts. Another ABA study, conducted in 1999, found women's pay to be 73% of that of their male counterparts.

Rhode's findings indicated that the greatest barrier to advancement is work/family conflict. Women leave law firms, and perhaps opt for public and corporate positions, because of family pressures and a lack of flexibility in terms of schedule. While some firms offer a flexible work schedule, many women fear that choosing such a schedule will hurt their opportunities for advancement, and they do not exercise that option.

Rhode's research summarized the barriers facing women in the legal profession as follows:

- Gender stereotypes
- Workplace structures that don't support a balanced life
- Lack of support networks
- Sexual harassment
- Gender bias in the justice system

*Source: *The Unfinished Agenda: Women in the Legal Profession*, ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, Deborah L. Rhode, 2001.

Interview Methodology and Results

The interviews focused on what separates women who reach the top from those who do not. All three groups interviewed were asked a core of similar questions, with some variation based on gender and experience in the legal field. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or by phone with lawyers throughout the state of California, with the majority in Northern California. Interview findings were

synthesized to ensure anonymity. Permission was asked to reference the remarks of interview subjects.

Approximately 30 California attorneys were interviewed for this project. This generated a large enough sample to identify patterns and trends. Generally, the interviews validated the research results regarding barriers to success. Within the small sample interviewed, there were few examples of sexual harassment or gender bias in the justice system. This does not mean, however, that these types of discrimination have not occurred more widely in the sample population. Since the interviews focused on successes of women in the legal profession rather than systemic problems in the justice system, these issues were not necessarily raised.

The following is a summary of the findings.

The Current Status of Women in the Legal Field

The field of law appears to be in transition. Senior attorneys who are now over 55 started out with few female colleagues. At the time, only men were in positions of authority and power. Some recalled how difficult it was for female law school graduates to get a job, and those that did were sometimes derided or propositioned. These men promoted those with whom they felt comfortable and who were similar to them, most commonly, other men. In the past 30 years, there have been dramatic changes in the workforce, including the professional fields. More and more women have entered the workforce, and many have entered the legal profession.

All of the senior male attorneys acknowledged that there is still some bias against female attorneys, but it is certainly not as blatant as it was 30 years ago. These male attorneys believe that today's bias is not deliberate or a result of malicious intentions, but rather due to systemic issues.

Female associates offered a somewhat different perspective. Some reported that they experienced bias from other male associates and not from the more senior male attorneys. One female associate remarked that it was not unusual for her or her law school colleagues to have male associates call them "baby" or "sweetie." Others remarked that when they entered a conference room, some of the males asked them to get them coffee. These female associates assumed that their male colleagues behaved in this manner as a way to jockey for position, or perhaps to undercut their female colleagues. They also experienced belittling behavior from male opposing counsel and assumed that this was an attempt to "rattle" the female attorney.

Senior partners in law firms rely on a "good old boy" network of powerful men who lead large corporations, and these connections generate a major source of firm business. On the other hand, male partners pointed out that many senior male attorneys have, by and large, supported and mentored talented female attorneys.

The female attorneys who reached top levels acknowledged that gender-blind males had been instrumental in their success; however, until more women reach the top of corporations and are in corporate economic buying roles, the cycle that unintentionally keeps female attorneys from firm equity positions will remain unchanged.

Retention among female attorneys is a pressing issue for the legal profession. (Rhode's research indicated that over 40% of associates leave their firm within three years.) All groups interviewed in the Ruben Consulting Group study, from senior male and female partners to female associates, indicated that the struggle to balance work and home life is real. The women emphasized that anyone who says it is easy to raise a family and have a full-time career is not telling the truth. Many in the sample said that while large firms talk about the importance of life balance, they do not "walk the talk," and attorneys are expected to work evenings and weekends. It is not unusual for attorneys in large firms to work 60-80 hours a week. Women who leave large firms and/or the profession often do so because they feel torn between the competing demands of their career and their personal lives.

Promising Trends

The interview data pointed out some promising trends for women in the legal field:

- 1. Women attorneys are sought after by women in positions of power who like to support and work with female attorneys. Some even go out of their way to request women.**

A key component for attorney success is networking and client generation. As the networks become less reliant on "good old boys," it will be easier for women to make the connections with key decision makers.

- 2. There is a willingness to discuss and tackle gender issues, something not true 30 years ago.**

Firms are aware of the negative consequences of sexual discrimination and harassment. High-profile legal actions like the 1998 *Weeks v. Baker & McKenzie* case have prompted firms to adopt policies and education programs to prevent such offenses. If and when there is discrimination, there are now internal processes in place to file complaints and seek justice. The interviews revealed that it is important for female attorneys to work with their firm management when encountering discrimination from opposing counsel. While client concerns should not override blatant discrimination, firms that support women attorneys will take decisive action to ensure equality.

3. **Men who are partners in firms are more likely to have daughters or granddaughters in law school than their fathers or grandfathers were at the same stage in their careers.**

The attorneys interviewed speculated that today's male partners are more sensitive to issues facing young women in law firms. In work concerning gender equity in corporations, this factor turned out to be the one that resonated most deeply and created an opening for change. The growing awareness of the issues facing their daughters and granddaughters allowed for a shift in mindset.

4. **Women generally no longer have to dress and act as men do to be accepted.**

In the early 1980's, women wore jackets and skirts that mimicked men's suits, and women were prohibited from wearing pants in a courtroom. Stories abound about early female pioneers in the professions and corporations who felt they had to act like men in order to be successful. "Like men" has a negative connotation, i.e., overly aggressive, pushy and not willing to support and bring others into the power structure. The interview data revealed that there are now role models of female managing partners who represent a variety of styles, and an ability to balance work and life. A consistent theme was the critical need for more "balanced" females as partners and managing partners.

5. **There are law firms that are truly gender-neutral, where talented women can soar.**

These tend to be smaller firms that have lower billable hour requirements for all attorneys. Female attorneys who work there are strongly committed to their careers, their firms and their profession. They have a level of flexibility and support that allows them to balance the demands of their outside life with the demands of the profession.

6. **Women can succeed in the larger firms, although there are more challenges.**

The billable hour requirement is higher for both men and women in larger firms. Even when employment policies allow women to work part-time or take time out for raising children, often the policies are not put into practice. In firms where female partners do take time to be with their newborn children and are full partners, young female associates can look to the top and see a positive role model. This encourages young women to stay with their chosen career and firm. On the other hand, when a female partner takes only two weeks off to give birth and then comes back to work, younger women think they must follow the same standard.

7. **Today's young women are less willing to sacrifice their lifestyles.**

The young female associates in the interview sample were well aware of the challenges of balancing work and family. Among those who wanted a

family, some thought that they would have to choose between career advancement and a family. Others said they found no role models in their firm to assure them that one could successfully do both. These women gave a lot of thought to determine what firms they chose. As they become a more dominant force, they will put more pressure on the legal system to accommodate them.

8. Young men are becoming accustomed to supporting the goals and needs of a two-professional couple.

As the population of women in law school has increased, their classmates have grown used to women as professional equals. Some of the female associates indicated that the younger men were more open-minded about women in the workplace. Senior male partners who had female bosses in their firm or during their internships appreciated and accepted women in the law. Examples of young professional couples, both juggling demanding careers and families, give hope of a new generation of law firm leadership seeking creative solutions to retain top talent and accommodate family needs.

The Male Partner Perspective

We asked male senior attorneys to cite specific actions by women that fostered their ability to rise to the top of law firms. There was consensus around four main factors:

Performance

This was the first and most universal response. Legal skills are a must for males and females. Lawyers acquire this expertise by taking on challenging cases and receiving ongoing feedback and mentoring.

Client Satisfaction

A corollary to being a good lawyer is satisfying clients in a way that is cost effective for the firm. Both women and men who have this skill are more likely to reach the top levels of the law firm.

Client Generation

Again, this is usually a requisite for males as well as females. They must be willing and able to develop effective networks and bring in business. There were some smaller firms in the sample that did not make this a requirement for partner, and took a more team-based approach to both generating and servicing clients. This practice seemed to be the exception rather than the rule.

A Good Mentor

Male senior attorneys commented that women who had either one or a series of dedicated mentors were more likely to succeed than those who did not. Some firms

had formal mentoring programs, in which they paired a senior attorney with an associate. In other firms, the mentoring happened on an informal basis. In still other firms, female associates had to seek out their own mentors.

What Contributed Most to the Success of Female Attorneys?

Senior female attorneys were asked what factors most contributed to their success. Women who pioneered in the profession indicated that roadblocks and challenges have diminished greatly over the years. Some had difficulty getting their first job at a firm. Others stated that they had to work harder and do better than the men to get ahead. Some of the female associates also said that they felt they needed to work harder than men in order to be successful.

Women who have become partners within the last 10 to 15 years indicated that their success hinged on a team atmosphere, on flexible schedules, and on having a number of female role models ahead of them as partners in the firm.

All of the women interviewed who have raised children while practicing law, or are now raising a family, emphasized that balancing work and life is very difficult. Those able to manage both simultaneously credited a spouse who supported their career goals. Also critical was either a spouse with a flexible schedule or a child-care provider whom the family trusted completely.

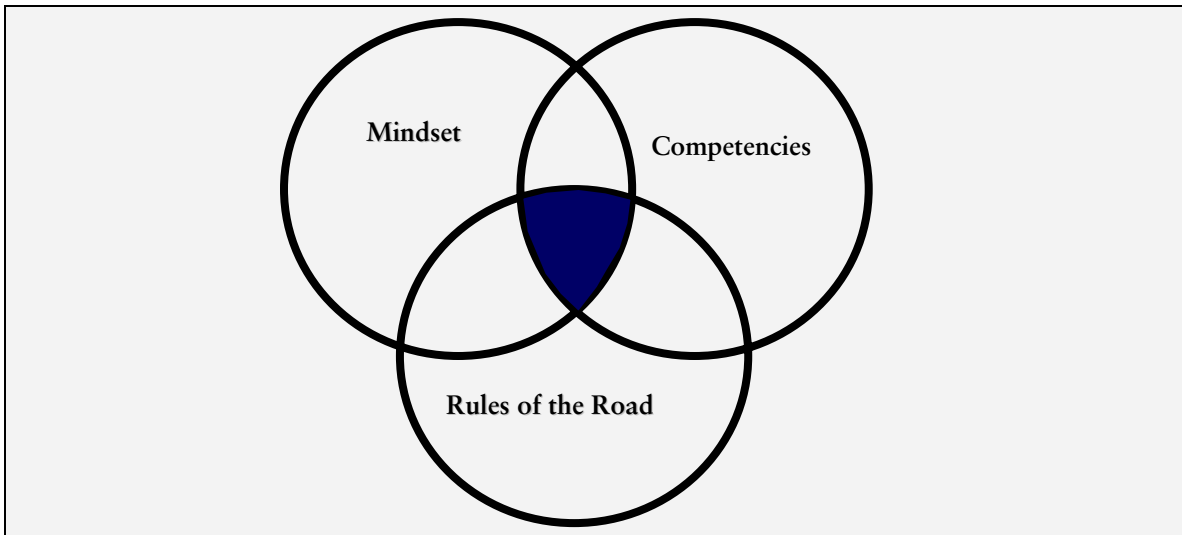
The Female Associate Perspective

We asked female associates the conditions that exist that make them feel that there either is or is not a “glass ceiling”. One of the less optimistic findings was that even though some women have become partners and managing partners in law firms, female associates still see the climb to the top as difficult. Some female associates expressed concern that there were not more women with families at the top of large firms. Others interviewed were troubled that some females at the top acted more like men than women, or seemed to have sacrificed their personal lives. Given that the majority of law students are now women, law firms face a challenge in retaining and motivating talented attorneys. Women lawyers could get discouraged when they see the sacrifices required to ascend.

Framework for Success—Mindset, Competencies, and Rules of the Road

Ruben Consulting Group created the following framework to classify actions, behaviors and strategies that help women (and men) overcome bias in the legal profession. Drawing on experience in organizational development and executive coaching, we developed this Venn diagram representing the intersection of three categories for success. A discussion of each component follows.

Framework for Success



Mindset

*Argue for your limitations, and sure enough, they're yours.
Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can.*

Richard Bach, Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah

Mindset is here defined as the collection of attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to success. In my own journey as a professional and my work with executives and organizations, I have found that the individual and collective mindset is an intangible but nonetheless powerful determinant in encouraging or inhibiting success.

The following is a synthesis of perspectives from our interviews with women who have reached the top, with male senior partners, and with female associates who have observed the highest-ranking women.

1. Conscious Choice

Women who reached the highest levels made a conscious choice, even an assumption, that they would be successful. They were clear about their goals and were willing to make sacrifices, including the hours worked, the time to learn and develop skills, time to network and be active in community and bar associations, without totally giving up their lives. Generally, these women held an optimistic view of the future and were able to develop resiliency and an ability to bounce back “when the going got tough.”

2. Core Beliefs

Many of those interviewed commented that what separated the women at the peak of the profession was the demonstration of a “can do” attitude and an almost unshakable confidence in themselves and their own abilities. Many felt that such confidence could be developed with early success and feedback from others. Women who have been able to “beat the odds” believe that women can do as well as or better than men. They also accept as true that they bring a set of capabilities, not merely their gender, to a team.

3. Commitment to Career

Women who succeeded demonstrated and felt a genuine commitment to their career. They truly loved the work, the intellectual stimulation, and the opportunity to work with other capable people. One senior partner at a major law firm told a story about a recent encounter with a new female associate. While giving her a performance review she asked him, “How can I excel, and be the best? I don’t just want a very good review, I want to be the best.” This senior partner said that no one, male or female, had ever asked him that before. He replied, “You have just distinguished yourself by asking that question. If you continue to feel that way, you will be the best.”

Women who succeeded also demonstrated a commitment to resolve the issues of balancing work and personal life. While it sometimes seemed that meeting every need was an impossibility, they looked for and found solutions that worked for themselves and their families.

4. Understanding the power of the mind

Those who succeeded understood, either consciously or unconsciously, that they were responsible for their own fate. They discovered that if they set a goal, and found a way to work through the natural fears that accompany any great endeavor, they could be successful. They also learned that they had a choice in how they viewed the circumstances of their life. They could see obstacles as permanent roadblocks or as challenges to overcome. Just as athletes develop the power of their minds, so have the most successful women in the legal field.

Competencies

Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.

Willa A. Foster

Competencies here are defined as the skills and abilities needed to succeed. Every person interviewed agreed that by far the most important competencies any attorney needs to master are basic legal skills and his or her area of specialization. This includes both excellent written and verbal skills. Additional skills cited are good people skills, that is, the ability to get along with and adapt to differences in style of clients, law firm colleagues and those within the court system.

Another competency necessary for success is client generation. When asked if this could be learned, some interviewees thought that even though it is a natural ability for some, through both education and training, it could be learned. The most effective rainmakers join organizations with likely referral sources and get involved in leadership roles. They also continue to develop a particular expertise and write articles and give speeches as a way to become visible and known to others.

Organizational skills were mentioned by a number of the interviewees. In particular, in order to successfully run a case, mentor others and manage associates, an attorney must be able to prioritize and effectively use time.

Political savvy, that is, an understanding of and ability to work within a power structure, was also frequently mentioned as both a competency and “rule of the road” (see next section). In particular, lawyers must take the time to observe and learn how the firm works, and discover ways to work within the system to get their needs met. It is also important to be able to identify and align with the most influential members of the firm.

Leadership skills are also among the most important ingredients for reaching the highest levels of law firms. The ability to create a vision and inspire others to follow is vital, as is the capability to speak to both the hearts and minds of firm members. Leadership also requires courage to confront difficult issues tactfully and to make tough decisions when they are necessary for the good of the firm.

Many of the attorneys interviewed learned leadership skills early on in school. Others acquired them through joining professional organizations and doing committee work so that they could “earn the right” to be considered for leadership positions. Some learned the skills by serving on nonprofit boards.

Rules of the Road

Business is as much a game as any other board, individual, or team sports game...men wrote the rules because they wrote alone.

Gail Evans, Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman

“Rules of the road” are here defined as the norms and customs within a group that define acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors and also distinguish one group from another. All interviewees were asked what “rules of the road” a female associate must master in order to rise to the top of her firm. A wide variety of data were collected and can be synthesized as follows:

- **Professionalism**

Professionalism encompasses both dress and decorum. Female associates observed that dressing to match the occasion was subtle yet important. Others advised the importance of being straight, direct and tactful. Still others spoke of the importance of not overly discussing personal affairs at the office or being too emotional. Finally, many mentioned the downside of complaining. Associates and partners are expected to put in the necessary time to get the work done. Constantly complaining, and then doing the work anyway, is perceived as an irritant and could be detrimental to career success.

- **Political savvy**

Understanding the firm’s power, authority structure and operating rules is critical. Some of the male partners emphasized the importance of having someone advocate for a female associate, rather than having her advocate for herself. Others counseled on the importance of “choosing your battles,” rather than feeling the need to fight for everything.

- **Self-awareness**

A few of the interviewees stressed the importance of knowing how you come across to others. This can be learned by asking for direct feedback. Sometimes law firm colleagues will give unsolicited feedback, and this was deemed helpful. One female partner, while an associate, realized that she was the only woman in the courtroom. She later had the opportunity to hear herself on a videotaped deposition and felt that she needed to drop her tone and speak more slowly. She also sought feedback from one of her colleagues on how she was coming across. She later consciously managed her voice and tone at her next court appearance. This proved to be invaluable feedback.

- **Respect for others**

Several in the interview sample mentioned that they had learned early on to treat everyone in the firm, no matter what their position, with respect. What

gets both male and female new associates in trouble is acting “superior” to the support staff. If support staff resent how they are treated they are less likely to provide the level of scheduling, word processing and paralegal support the associate needs to succeed.

- **Work within the system**

Each firm has its own unique culture. What works in one firm may not work in another. In firms in which teamwork and collegiality are valued, being competitive with other lawyers keeps people from the top levels. In other firms, not being available for client calls is not advisable. It is important to become aware of and adjust to the style of the firm.

Strategies to Promote Gender Equality

Based on all the data collected, the following are suggested strategies for law firms, senior male partners, female partners, female associates and female law school graduates.

Strategies for Law Firm Management Committees

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm leadership is the single biggest determinant. If senior partners believe in and value a system based on meritocracy, they will create the conditions that foster such an environment. Areas to address include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a selection process that is gender-neutral and based on merit. ○ Distribute important and visible assignments based on merit, not gender. ○ Give women power and responsibility within the firm (e.g., committee heads), but not just as a gender token. ○ Create a robust development and feedback process, so that associates know where they stand and what they need to do to make partner. ○ Provide flexibility regarding hours during child-rearing years. Encourage part-time schedules after children are born, and let women ease slowly back into the firm. ○ Be sure that women are not taken off the partner track if they take time out to be with their families. ○ Develop diverse ways to measure everyone’s contributions, besides just billing and client generation. • Law firm management may speak gender equality, but in reality may not practice it. Here are some specific ideas to ensure talk is translated into action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct an internal assessment to determine the practices that foster gender neutrality and those that do not. ○ Develop a mentoring program that pairs senior lawyers with new female associates, and monitor its effectiveness. ○ Regularly ask talented female associates what actions will encourage their retention, and respond accordingly. ○ Develop a program with timelines and metrics for promoting women partners, and impose consequences for not achieving goals. |
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Strategies for Male Partners

- Examine your beliefs about women as peers and leaders. Participate in training that uncovers unconscious biases.
- Ask for neutral feedback from others about your behavior toward women. Take appropriate actions based on findings.
- Encourage and support female associates in the same way that you encourage and support male associates.
- Assign high-profile cases to talented female associates.
- Ask women attorneys their opinions, and genuinely weigh their input.
- Provide ongoing training, advice and mentoring to women.
- Be accessible to female attorneys working on key cases.
- When a male client keeps calling you instead of the female associate who is working on the case, refer him to the associate in a way that engenders confidence.
- Help female associates understand the unwritten rules, power structure and alliances within the firm and the court system.
- Teach client generation skills, and bring associates along on client prospecting calls.

Strategies for Female Partners and Managing Partners

- Pursue all of the strategies outlined above for male partners.
- Consider your responsibility as a role model and mentor.
- Offer encouragement and a “hand up” to female associates.
- If you had a particularly rough road, consider the lessons you learned as a body of knowledge that could benefit others. Try to overcome the belief that because it was tough for you, it has to be tough for other women.
- Give meaningful and frequent feedback. Let true talent emerge and shine.
- Help women having children identify ways to handle the additional pressures. Share what you know about what works and what doesn’t.
- Identify specific actions you can take to retain talented female associates.
- Take your role as a leader seriously; advocate for a true meritocracy in your firm.

Strategies for Female Associates

- Develop expertise in your field, and focus on being a great lawyer.
- Learn the mindsets, competencies and rules for success, and begin on a path to acquiring them.
- Develop your own networks for generating clients. If partners are concentrating on the top tier of corporate management, focus on the second tier. You can grow with this tier.
- Seek a mentor in your firm or in your local bar association.
- Locate and participate in women's networking groups.
- Join your local bar association, and find ways to contribute in a leadership role.
- Seek specific feedback on your style, and make modifications to increase your effectiveness.
- Don't compete against other women. Instead, compete against yourself by constantly challenging yourself to learn, grow and take new risks.
- Find your own style, and be true to it.

Strategies for Female Law School Graduates

- Identify your core values in the practice of law.
- Seek out firms that reflect your values.
- Use the network of previous law school graduates to get information on the culture of law firms you are considering.
- When interviewing, ask for the facts about women in the firm:
 - How many women associates do they have? How many male associates?
 - What is the retention rate for female associates? For male associates?
 - How many female partners do they have? How many males?
 - What is the retention rate for female partners? For male partners?

Conclusion

If we don't get the people thing right, we lose; it's the most important thing in all of our business.

Jack Welch, former CEO, General Electric

The legal profession is at a turning point. More women than men are choosing the law as a career. Yet, at the same time, talented female associates and partners are leaving their firms, and even the profession, because they don't feel that their needs are being met. In corporations, the loss of key talent can cost millions of dollars in recruitment expenses, work put on hold, loss of clients, and lowered morale and productivity. Firms invest a great deal to develop new attorneys. The return on that investment depends on creativity in addressing issues of concern to women.

A true meritocracy requires both institutions and individuals to do their part. Law firms and lawyers alike need certain mindsets and competencies, and an understanding of the rules of the road. There are tremendous opportunities to recreate the culture of law firms.

Female attorneys who wish to can beat the odds and make it to the top levels of the legal profession. They will do well if they commit themselves to mastering the necessary attitudes and skills and learning the unwritten rules. With a similar commitment from their peers, from law firm management committees, and from senior partners of both genders, the next generation of women lawyers will be fully represented in the top ranks of the legal profession.

Further Reading

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Marcia Teitelbaum Ruben is a Certified Management Consultant and Principal of Ruben Consulting Group, a management-consulting firm based in San Francisco. Marcia has over 25 years of business, management and consulting experience.

Ruben Consulting Group helps its clients strengthen their leadership, team, and organizational performance. The firm has worked with corporate and professional firms of all sizes in both the private and public sector. Services specifically for law firms include:

- Design and facilitation of strategic planning off-sites
- Firm assessments of gender equity program effectiveness
- Leadership and Management Committee coaching
- Change Management and Merger Integration Consultation
- Leadership development and partnership track programs for female associates
- Retention Strategies to attract/retain key talent
- Workshops: Client Generation and Retention; Creating Gender Equity
- Team Building
- Public Speaking

Prior to starting her own practice in 1998, Marcia was a principal and vice president at two San Francisco based management-consulting firms, The Dublin Group and Changeworks Solutions. Before that, she served as both a senior account executive and performance consultant at Wilson Learning, an international consulting and training firm. Marcia has also held middle and senior management positions at two Fortune 500 companies.

Marcia has been published in the 2001 Jossey-Bass Consulting Annual, NCHRA newsletter, and HR.Com, and writes and speaks on a variety of leadership and change issues. She has presented at the Annual California State Bar Annual Meeting.

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