

BUSINESS & CAREERS

How to manage your time more effectively

The issue of time management comes up more often when I am working with my clients. If you don't have effective systems to manage your time, you won't be that keen on adding time to your schedule for business development and marketing your practice. Not only that, you won't be maximizing your billable time. As lawyers your time is everything. You get pulled in multiple directions all day long. So it's even more important that you become effective at managing it. Here are some of the tips I share with my clients.



THE COACH
GARY MITCHELL

your tasks in a list. Make sure to refer to this list throughout your day (especially when all the distractions come at you). When it appears everything is a priority, take a second look—use your prioritized task list as a guide. Block time into your calendar for business development efforts and stick to it. It's more important to do some on a regular basis than none at all.

Start your day with intention

As soon as you get to your office take a few (10) minutes to look at your day and prioritize

End your day with intention

Before you leave for the day, take the last few minutes to

review your task list. Did you get everything done you needed to? If not, how is that going to affect tomorrow and the rest of your week? How does it affect your clients? Do you need to make a quick phone call or send an email update to a client to let them know you won't make that deadline? It's very important to keep them up to speed and if you are running behind, be honest about it. Most of the time, they will appreciate of your honesty. And always be planning. Always be reviewing. It will keep you focused and on track.

On a weekly basis

Get yourself into the habit every Friday afternoon to organize your office and desk. If files

are all over the place, take a few minutes to organize them. Think about walking into your office on Monday morning to a clean and organized environment. How will that affect the way you start your week?

Then on the following Monday morning when you arrive in your office, look at your week on the whole. This might seem like you are adding tasks to your day, but most if not all of my clients that have followed these tips report less stress, higher sense of control and well-being about their workday.

Set deadlines for all tasks

No matter what the task, a discovery meeting or a trial you are preparing for, a contract negotiation, mediation or arti-

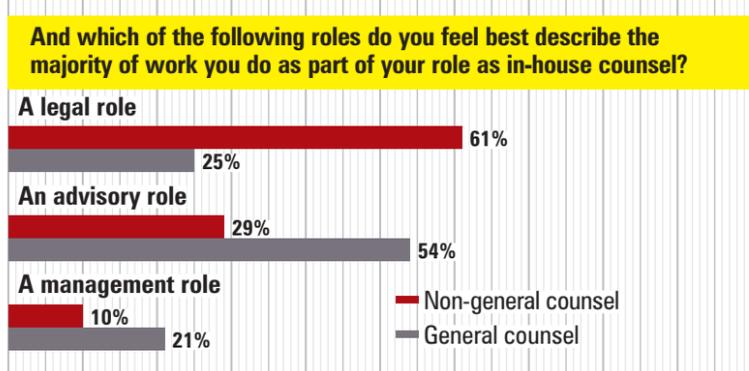
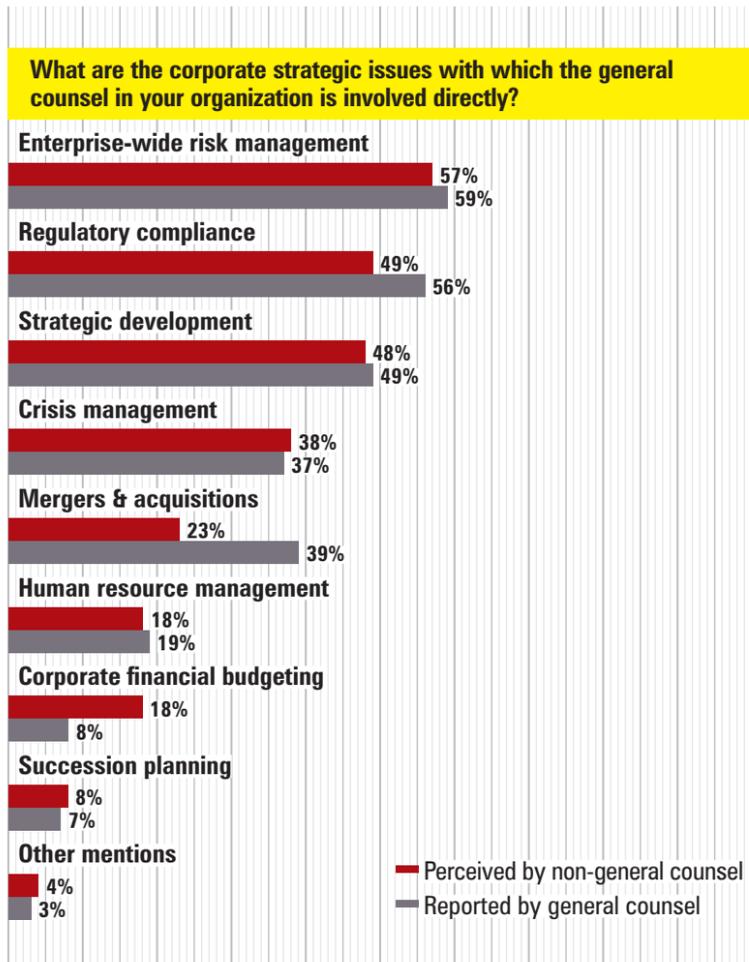
cle to be published or a seminar to present—get in the habit of setting your deadlines for completion two days ahead of time. If you can set it even earlier, do it. This will give you the luxury of time. What this does is invaluable.

By setting your deadlines ahead of time, you can allow yourself to break from that task and either focus some time with your business development efforts or others tasks. When you get into this habit you will also find that when you go back to the original task, you'll have fresh eyes and mind, and you're more likely to notice something or even many things that you can improve on. You will make fewer mistakes and the finished

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In-house Counsel summer edition out now

The Canadian Corporate Counsel Association's (CCCA) 2011 *In-house Counsel Barometer* asked Canadian in-house counsel recently:



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Find more survey results in our summer 2011 issue of *In-house Counsel*, available in this issue of *The Lawyers Weekly*.

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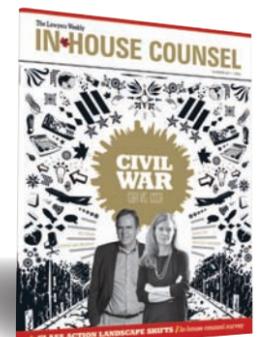
The Canadian Corporate Counsel Association vs. the Canada Bar Association

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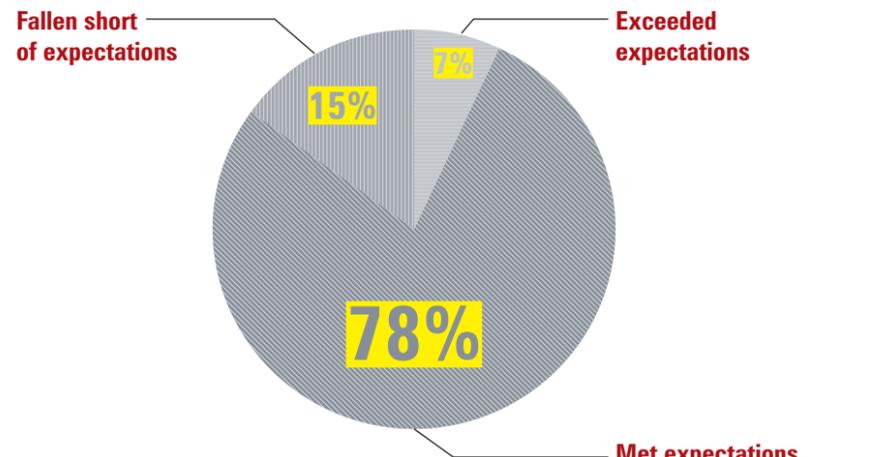
A look at the offices of Trent University's legal team

+ ADVERTISING

Advertising pitfalls all in-house counsel should be aware of



Thinking generally about the services supplied by outside counsel to you or your organization over the last year, would you say they have exceeded your expectations, met your expectations or fallen short of your expectations?



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Managing your time better is possible now

Time

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product, whatever it may be, will be better.

Tips to avoid distractions

Don't fall off your chair when you read this next tip—just try it. Turn off your email alert until you are finished the task at hand. If you are working on a crucial file or deadline that requires regular contact with the client, then set times throughout the day that you will block off to check and respond to email. You will know for yourself depending on the clients and files that you are working on, how often you should be checking your email. Take control of your technology so it doesn't control you. If the phone rings and it's not the crucial client, don't answer it. Again, schedule blocks of time in your calendar to check your voicemail.

Plan ahead

For every deadline, event, meeting, lunch, or networking opportunity—spend a little time in advance mak-

ing a clear and concise list of objectives you wish to achieve. This will allow you to be well prepared and strategic in your approach. And by planning ahead, you can avoid having your “job” or “tasks,” get in the way of your career.

Lead management

Don't rely on memory or a card file to manage your leads or clients. Create an excel file where you have categories for: current clients, past clients, other lawyers, prospects and personal contacts. Across the top of the document create headings to include: name, company, relationship, notes, and next steps. Keep this document on your desktop and keep it updated so you will always have a good idea where you are with your contacts and what you need to do with them next.

Managing growth

When you are engaged in business development and you have learned to become organized with your practice, you can expect growth. Here are some things to keep in mind. Start delegating work to junior lawyers when it's appro-

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priate. Start pruning some of the lower paying work, either by sending it to a junior at your firm or by using your referral network and sending it to a lawyer at another firm. This is important when you begin bringing in the higher level work that you are targeting. You still want to be able to have time for business development, so don't hang

onto work that doesn't serve your longer term purpose.

When you do pass off clients to juniors, always remain in communication with both the client and the lawyer doing the work. Do not let the client feel that they have been abandoned. Keep a close eye on the file so you can ensure the level of service is up to what the client has grown to expect.

Try some or all of these tips and find yourself more relaxed, less stressed and more in control of your day. Skeptical? Of course you are, you are a lawyer after all. Keep in mind my clients have used these tips to improve their day-to-day efficiency which has led to more effective business development efforts, which has led to more business. ■

Gary Mitchell is a client development coach working exclusively with lawyers to help them take their practice to the next level, become partner faster and build their own book of business.

We want to hear from you!
 Email us at: tlw@lexisnexis.ca

Focus Editor, *The Lawyers Weekly*

Location: Markham

We have an immediate opening on our Newspaper team. You will:

- Solicit stories for the weekly “focus” sections of *The Lawyers Weekly* from lawyers, writers and other professionals.
- Edit focus section stories.
- Assist with the layout of focus sections.
- Write stories as required.
- Attend meetings, conferences and seminars to make contacts and gather story ideas for the focus section.
- Work with *The Lawyers Weekly* team on other sections of the newspaper.
- Participate in the management and development of the newspaper's web site.

The ideal candidate will possess a post-secondary education in law, previous journalism or legal publishing experience, an ability to work as part of an editorial team in a deadline-driven newspaper environment, and a creative outlook. Experience with Microsoft® Word in a PC environment is required. InDesign® experience is preferred.

Contact Information:

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 123 Commerce Valley Drive East, Suite 700,
 Markham, Ontario L3T 7W8

Fax: 905-479-9241 | Email: pina.messiha@lexisnexis.ca



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Corporate Counsel

Location: Markham • Contract / Part-Time Position

LexisNexis, a leading global provider of content-enabled workflow solutions, services the following Canadian market segments: large law firms, medium-sized law firms, small law firms, corporations, corporate counsel, government and academic.

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- Privacy: Provide advice on privacy legislation, and review and update internal and external privacy policies.
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- Contracts: draft new customer contracts and terms and conditions for new products, review and draft contracts for services with third-party vendors, manage and control vendor contracts, control and manage standard non-disclosure agreements, and review and draft custom non-disclosure agreements.
- Intellectual Property: liaise with global IP department on patent, trademark and copyright matters to protect LexisNexis Canada intellectual property, and respond to any alleged infringement matters.
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- Compliance: provide advice and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations (i.e., competition, accessibility, consumer protection and consumer reporting laws and regulations).
- Employment: work with the Human Resources department in dealing with a variety of employment-related issues.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Bachelor of Laws degree
- 3-5 years of related experience
- Excellent analytical, research, writing and presentation skills
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
- Experience with employment and commercial agreements
- Knowledge of privacy and consumer reporting legislation an asset
- Client service focus
- Team player attitude
- Initiative and self-motivation

Closing Date: July 11, 2011

Contact Information: Athina Iliadis, Human Resources Consultant
 123 Commerce Valley Drive East, Suite 700, Markham, Ontario L3T 7W8
 Fax: 905-479-9241 | Email: athina.iliadis@lexisnexis.ca



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