

BUSINESS & CAREERS

Skillfully navigating the road to partnership

If attaining full partnership is one of your goals, this article is for you.

Whether you're a junior associate or more senior and closer to partnership, or a non-equity partner, there are some non-legal and non-business development things you can do to increase your odds at making partner.

These tips come from some of my clients who, while working with me or soon afterwards, attained full partnership. They are based on what they believe most firms look at when considering associates for partnership.

It boils down to this: Are you one of us? Do you get along



THE COACH

GARY MITCHELL

well with others? And, are you making a contribution to the success of the firm in one or many ways?

So how do you do that?

First, build or strengthen quality internal relationships with staff. That includes everyone from the receptionist, to your assistant, the marketing, administration, IT, finance, HR and library staff.

■ How well do you know them?

■ What kind of relationship do you have with them?

■ Find out exactly what they do and how that supports you.

■ What are their frustrations?

■ What are their career goals?

■ How would they like to create more impact?

■ Is there any way you can help them become more successful?

■ Share your own career goals.

■ Ask them how they would like to support you and your practice.

■ How can you make it easier for them to help you?

■ How can you engage them to become more involved with your practice?

It's really simple. Be likeable and helpful with everyone you come into contact with and you will build bridges and make friends.

Take a similar approach in building relationships with other lawyers at your firm:

■ Be genuinely interested.

■ Get to know them — their goals, frustrations, how you can help them and how you can work together.

■ If you are more senior, offer to partner with juniors to create articles or presentations (cutting down on the time each of you invests in this).

■ If you are junior, approach the senior lawyers and offer to do the up-front research for an article or presentation if they will co-author the piece.

■ Are there opportunities to cross-serve each other's clients?

■ Don't get discouraged if you get pushback from a few. Look for like-minded partners and associates who understand and support a team approach.

■ Work with those lawyers to further build more relationships and organic teams (people you like to work with who are like-minded and on the same path, either ahead of, or behind you.)

The next thing to consider is how you can give back. Ask yourself 'in what ways can I contribute to my firm?'

■ What committees can you contribute to?

■ How can you support student and associate programs or recruitment efforts?

■ What types of leadership roles can you take on within your practice groups?

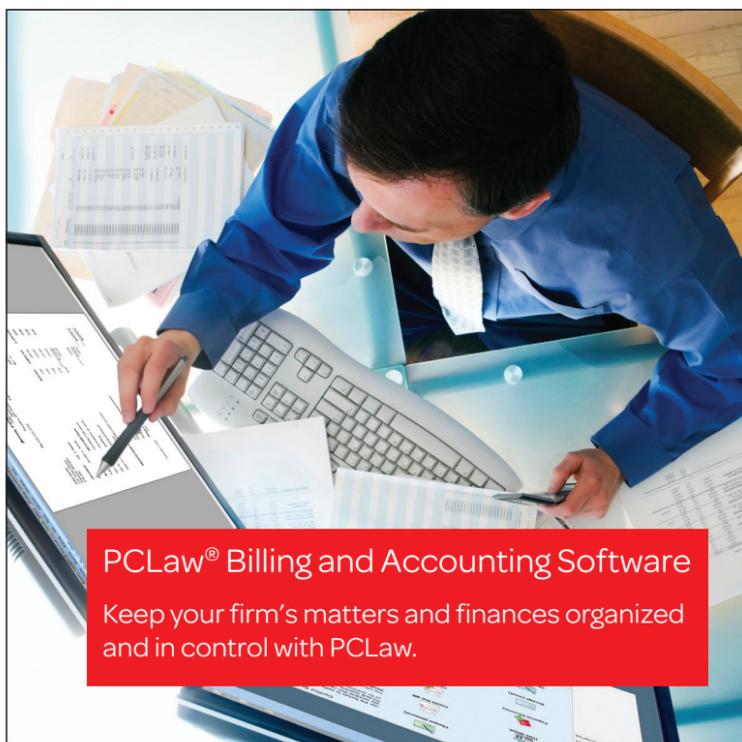
development. Look at the needs of your clients and determine what you need in the way of people and skills for the team you are building to serve them.

Now you will be in the mentor role. Take the time to develop your team so that they can surpass the needs of your clients. Share your vision with each member one-on-one and help

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Gary Mitchell,
On Trac Coach



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