

2009 NALP Conference



2009 NALP Conference  
 The Core Curriculum: Training for Summer Associate Programs

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**FIRST STEPS – Where to begin?**

- Start early
  - Take the “quieter” time of the Winter and Spring months to start brainstorming
  - Create a team
- Find Support
  - Is there a strong senior lawyer who can help shepherd initiatives?
  - Chair of Training Committee/Summer Program Committee
  - Consider asking for associate volunteers from the Summer Program Committee



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**COME UP WITH A PLAN**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take inventory</li> <li>▪ Ask your audience</li> <li>▪ What are the firm’s specialties?</li> <li>▪ Concentrated training vs. Overviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Latest market trends in your region</li> <li>▪ Areas for summer associate improvement</li> <li>▪ Do you need outside help</li> </ul>
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## Take Inventory

- Do an inventory of your current programming
- What are you offering?
- Does it still make sense?
- What didn't work?

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## Ask your Audience

- Conduct focus groups with current junior associates who were recently in the summer program.
- What do they remember from their training?
- What was forgettable?
- What do they still NOT know?
- "I never learned how to use my phone."
- "Do we really have an antitrust practice?"
- "I really wish we had learned more about..."

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## Firm Specialties

- What is the firm known for?
- Utilize training that not only trains the summers in what you do but also showcases the firm – you can recruit/market, as well as, teach.
- Great opportunity to get your "big" partners out meeting the summers.
- Highlight recent transactions or cases that have been in the news – don't necessarily need to "train" at a training program

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## Concentrated training vs. Overviews

- Focus your more hands on training around your stronger practice areas, i.e., a litigation firm could do a deposition skills training; a corporate firm could do a corporate drafting training
- Smaller practice areas can do overviews
- There is only so much time in a summer
- Be selective

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## Latest Market Trends

- What's going on in your particular region?
- In Washington, DC: regulatory practices are busy...should you do programming on dealing with government agencies?
- In New York: does it make sense to do "informational training" on latest market trends, i.e., Wall Street chat? CEO compensation? Bank failures?

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## Areas for Improvement

- Where have you seen struggles over the years?
  - Writing?
  - Presentation skills?
  - Time Management?
  - Negotiation Skills?
- Think of innovative training programs centered around skills that could be helpful outside of the firm.
- Summers will go back to school remembering new skills they learned

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## Do you need outside help?

- Consultants vs. In-house
  - Who best to handle some training?
  - Is there a partner who can teach writing- great!
  - Use consultants in areas where you want to make sure the training gets done- if it's on the books, it's harder to cancel.
    - Note on headhunters: This year is an especially good year to negotiate on rates
    - Use the opportunity in the summer to vet some consultants that you might want to use for the Fall
    - Consultants are "paying to play"

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## Other Ideas

- Use alumni network.
- Are there former associates who have gone to the government, banks, corporations- could they come back and do presentations?
- Think outside the box of your typical training programs- "Dealing with Outside Counsel"; "Relationship Management"

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## TIPS TO MAKE THE PROGRAMMING HAPPEN AND WELL-ATTENDED

- Get your best speakers
  - Pick attorneys who have the best presentation skills. Are they good with PowerPoint?
  - Sometimes that name partner is not the best
  - Students prefer interaction rather than being talked at – make it the least like law school as possible
- Vary your training times
  - Breakfast and lunch are good time slots but consider – milk and cookies or chips and salsa at 4
- Create an exciting calendar
  - Showcase your schedule
  - Good advertising means you care about the programming

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TIPS TO MAKE THE PROGRAMMING HAPPEN AND WELL-ATTENDED  
continued

- **Make your schedule manageable**
  - Don't try to do too much
  - Just like "event fatigue" during the summer, summer associates can get "training fatigue."
  - Consider tabling some good ideas to the next year
  - If you overload – they won't remember the good stuff – just that they had to go to a lot of training
- **Challenges of cost cutting**
  - We have all been asked to cut costs – be creative in your planning and make sure your ideas are doable and will be approved
  - Use internal resources where you are able; librarians can teach on research tools, a paralegal might be able to help on SEC and court filings
  - Negotiate with consultants
  - Use Alumni resources

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ASSESSING THE END RESULT

- **Feedback**
  - Always ask for feedback
  - Get the feedback after each program. Don't wait until the end of the summer
  - Use this information to tailor upcoming programs during the summer and for future summers
  - Pick up the phone/drop by an office – sometimes people are more willing to talk then write down their thoughts
  - Pick and choose the critiques; you can't do everything and shouldn't – pick out what you think are the best comments and implement
- **Don't be afraid to hear the bad stuff**
  - Rome wasn't built in a day! There will be bumps – it's a learning process and every firm is different – sometimes it takes a couple of tries before things work perfectly

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GOOD LUCK!

Any questions?

Thank you!

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