



# Escaping Your Silo: Best Practices for Working Cooperatively Across Law Firm Administrative Departments

NALP 2009 Annual Education Conference

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## Goals for Today's Presentation



- Discuss common goals and agendas of law firm departments and functions that require cross-departmental collaboration
  - Diversity
  - Human Resources
  - Marketing
  - Professional Development
  - Legal Recruitment
- Identify challenges to effective working relationships across law firm departments, including the "silo effect": lack of communication and collaborative goal-setting between departments in an organization
- Discuss strategies and best practices to overcome challenges
- Identify unique collaborative opportunities

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## Diversity and Inclusion



- Create and execute strategies to increase recruitment of minority and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) attorneys
  - Active collaboration with Legal Recruitment
- Create and execute strategies to improve retention and address disproportionately higher attrition rates of minority, LGBT and women attorneys, and recommend strategies to prevent discrimination and other barriers to meaningful integration of all attorneys and staff.
  - Active collaboration with Office of Attorney Development (OAD), Human Resources
- Design and administer Firm mentoring programs, to maintain an inclusive work environment and foster professional development.
  - Active collaboration with OAD
- Design and execute Firm diversity-related sponsorship and relationship goals with external organizations, and oversee Firm outreach to clients and legal organizations regarding Firm diversity initiatives and results.
  - Active collaboration with Legal Recruitment, Marketing

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## Legal Recruitment



- Facilitate the recruitment and hiring of summer and first-year associates, judicial clerks, discovery and project attorneys, as well as lateral associates, special counsel and partners.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Human Resources
- Create and design marketing materials and website sections aimed at law students, summer and first-year associates and judicial clerks.
  - Active collaboration with Marketing
- Coordinate participation in OCI and job fair programs, callback interviews and receptions, interview programs, offer dinners, and 1L winter and spring programs. Design and oversee annual summer associate program.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Marketing
- Conduct outreach with law school career services offices across the country and with student and affinity groups at those law schools.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Marketing
- Develop policies on a wide-range of issues including base compensation and bonuses, class standing, expense reimbursements, and department and practice group rotations placements.
  - Active collaboration with Human Resources

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## Human Resources



- Manage provision of attorney administrative services including orientation, compensation, policy review and development, attorney leaves, part-time and flex-time arrangements, annual performance reviews, work-life balance, and departure procedures.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Legal Recruitment, Marketing, OAD
- Partner with management on employee relations efforts to maintain positive working relationships, eliminate potentially discriminatory practices and achieve prompt, internal resolution of conflicts.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, OAD
- Build management, leadership, and technical skills that meet the specific needs of management group, and broaden institutional knowledge of other departments, through training programs.
  - Active collaboration with Marketing, OAD
- Maintain and utilize HRIS database of information for all offices for internal and external reporting purposes and statistical analyses. Execute appraisal process for administrative staff members.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Legal Recruitment, Marketing, OAD

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## Marketing and Communications



- Ensure consistent representation of Fried Frank brand across all internal and external audiences
  - Active collaboration with Diversity and Legal Recruitment on collaterals focused on recruits
  - Active collaboration with Human Resources and OAD on materials directed towards attorneys and staff
- Encourage and support networking initiatives among partners and associates
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Human Resources and OAD
- Develop business development acumen among associates
  - Active collaboration with Diversity and OAD

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## Professional Development



- Develop, implement and monitor professional training, firm-wide leadership development and externship programs and continuing legal educational needs of attorneys across offices and practice areas.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Human Resources, Marketing
- Develop and implement first-year associate orientation program.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Human Resources, Marketing, Legal Recruitment
- Annual implementation of associate evaluation process.
  - Active collaboration with Human Resources
- Design and administer Firm mentoring programs, and assist practice group heads in monitoring associate development.
  - Active collaboration with Diversity, Human Resources

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## Challenges



- Hierarchical nature of law firms
  - Partners / Associates; Attorneys / Staff; Lawyer Staff / Non-Lawyer Staff; Headquarters / Branch Offices
  - Breeds insecurity and fosters disincentives to communication and collaboration
- Authority to oversee an issue / function that arises in many other departments
  - Limited area which you completely, independently direct
  - Obtaining critical information you don't collect or monitor
  - Resolving disagreement to maintain best long-term working relationships
  - Sharing credit for success and responsibility for mistakes
  - Reconciling conflicting direction from leadership regarding similar goals
- Necessity of relying on others to complete a project that is your responsibility
  - Requires trust and a balancing of priorities
  - Recognition that leadership and support roles will shift with different projects
  - Willingness to support others as they have supported you
  - Maintenance of mutual respect and flexibility is important, particularly in working with peers at your same position level, as well as subordinate position levels
- Special needs in launching a new department and unique initiative
  - Critical need for buy-in, credibility, and limiting backlash
  - Promotion necessary to demonstrate value-added

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## Best Practices in Collaboration



- Encourage collaboration structurally through Firm Committees that include staff from many departments across offices
  - Work/Life Balance; Recruiting; Professional Development and Mentoring; Business Development and Marketing
- Promote visibility for colleagues with partners and associates
  - Publicly acknowledge contributions and share credit
  - Speak well of each other; build a reputation as a team player in order to build capital with peers you need for support
- Communicate effectively
  - Email respectfully and with caution; know your audience and don't underestimate the value of face-to-face communication
  - Share information regarding your plans – don't launch in secret to be "first"
  - Use managers meetings to review your goals and agenda and get helpful ideas from colleagues
  - Colleagues can share potentially helpful substantive information that wouldn't be obvious to you to ask for and not "labeled" as within your area
- Take time to think with your colleagues' hats on
  - Think outside the box and proactively regarding who might be impacted by or share an interest in your projects
  - Share information that might not obviously fall under another's purview
  - Think of all the "moving parts" of a project

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## Best Practices in Collaboration



- Encourage "Firm as Team" mentality
  - Although each Director/Manager leads a department or group with diverse responsibilities and goals, remember that the Firm as a whole is a team
  - Successes for the Firm are also successes for each individual department at the Firm; Support colleagues' efforts as you would have them support yours
- Respect others' time and be honest about deadlines
  - Endeavor toward advance planning whenever possible to allow the maximum amount of time to complete a project
  - Inform colleagues of challenges and competing deadlines you are facing that sometimes require short notice requests, while being respectful of their other obligations
  - Avoid false deadlines, inform others if deadlines are extended and build trust that your stated deadlines are genuine
- Strategize with trusted colleagues about how to handle challenging colleagues
  - You're likely not the first person to find this person a challenge
  - Aim for peer resolution rather than directive dictated by a third person in authority

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## Collaborative Projects List



	Diversity	Human Resources	Marketing	Professional Development	Recruiting
National survey responses regarding law firm culture and practices (e.g., Am Law Midlevel, NALP, Vault, Yale Law Women, 50 Best Law Firms for Women)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Orientation of new attorneys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mentoring program assignments	✓	✓		✓	✓
Professional development, training and networking programs for attorneys, including affinity groups	✓		✓	✓	
Attorney rotations and practice group assignments		✓		✓	✓

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## Collaborative Projects List



	Diversity	Human Resources	Marketing	Professional Development	Recruiting
Coordination of pro bono fellowship programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning and execution of diversity events (e.g., work/life balance forums, affinity group guest speakers, events for women, LGBT, minority students and attorneys)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Using website as communications vehicle to external audiences, especially law students, laterals and potential administrative staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop and administer part-time and flex-time programs for attorneys	✓	✓		✓	
Dissemination of information regarding employee assistance and work/life programs (back-up childcare, employee assistance programs, etc)		✓	✓	✓	

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