

COMPILATION OF RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES PRESENTED IN:

Can It Be Done? Creating a Great Place For Women Attorneys

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Instructions: You will have 15 minutes to design a new law firm. You have no limits or constraints except the challenge you will be assigned. We will give you a 5-minute warning and ask you to write down on this page the way you new firm will deal with the challenge it faces. We will then ask you to report out on how you designed you firm to address your challenge. At the end of the exercise, we will collect all these pages and compile a description of your firms and ideas, which we will post on the NALP conference site.

Your challenge: There will be no distinctions among anyone in the firm. There will be no partners, associates, counsel, or staff. All will have the same status.

- Every person has an equal vote
- 360° evaluations
- Equal profit sharing
- Respect for all based on skill set (back to equal vote)
- Trust everyone has something to gain by succeeding.

Your challenge: Clients will not be billed except at the end of the matter.

- Give client a range within fee schedule of cost with a cap
- Define "end of matter" in engagement letter; length of time – what if it goes on for 5 years.
- Define hourly based vs. project based (expectation how many hours and what level attorney)
- Give status reports on projection
- Would want low firm overhead and variable costs
- Take on type of work within specified timeframe of conclusion (not endless litigation)
- Could still have full-service firm and have subsets of practices that use the bill at the end of matter. Commodity-type work.

- What will bill look like at end of year? Itemized?
- Just list the action step – research; file motion

Your challenge: The firm will have no office or physical location.

- "facefirm" – lawfirm = facebook
- 1. Public vs. private - fire wall
- 2 Update – Ari is in Court
- 3. Wall – Firm culture – "grouping first"
- 4. Practice Groups and Projects – employment – tax
- 5. Knowledge requirement
- 6. Encourage visit to client site – focus on their business
- 7. Physical location at clients

Your challenge: Clients will not be billed except at the end of the matter.

- Create an estimate of services for the client
- Appoint an attorney who advises client along the way re services rendered, unexpected challenges, costs, etc.
- Give the client a chance to have input on services rendered, costs, levels of service, etc.
- Each matter would have a "project manager to oversee the work distribution"

Your challenge: There is no way to determine how many years a lawyer has been out of law school.

- Computerizing based system that reflects: areas of specialization; level of experience; various additional constitutions (i.e. admin/client dev.)
- Start at base level 3 to 4 years general training then 4+ specialization
- Firm structure units are based on competencies, etc., and job done
- All mandates are managed through a client relationship person who manages the project and allocates the work.

- Projects are granted on overall number and money, which also increases efficiency for client and internal work allocation purposes

Your challenge: The firm will have no clocks, watches or other timekeeping devices.

- Value billing based on (1) type of matter; (2) prior experience re similar matter; (3) calculate hours = fee; (4) akin to plaintiffs attorney, defense attorney [Litigation Budget]
- Rewards/incentives – stay within budget; cons –
- Merit – commission – diversity
- Better, more holistic performance review process; incremental, not just annual year-end review re one evaluation form

Your Challenge: No one in the firm will work more than 20 hours a week.

- 3-day work week
- First half of week is Monday -Wednesday. Second half is Wednesday – Friday with overlap on Wednesday to have team meeting to update on progress of work on case and give new assignments.
- Practice leader in each workgroup that rotates so experiences are diverse.

Your Challenge: The highest compensation will be paid to the lawyers who successfully conclude client matters in the least amount of time.

- Quality control mechanism – clients must evaluate work at conclusion, and evaluation will be component of success; attorney self-evaluation of success of deal/outcome; would need billable hour component? measure; benchmarks/minimums established at beginning of assignment
- Training required – efficiency training; team management; best practice training.
- Clients can select bill rate based on sliding scale of fees for completion
- Model is not appropriate for all practice areas
- Could evaluate number of assignments completed in a given time frame
- Allow practice areas to interpret rule for their subject area
- Certain attorneys can work on upkeep of forms for use by attorneys.

- Assign value to different tasks, projects and assignments – e.g., mid level associate does X number of projects and is evaluated by 3 supervisors
- Assign value to non-billable work – e.g., recruiting, marketing, pro-bono, diversity
- Create a track based on point system
- Clients must evaluate work at conclusion and this evaluation will be a component of success
- Clients can select billing rate based on a sliding scale of fees for speed of completion
- Not appropriate for all practice areas