

2011 NALP Annual Education Conference
Diverse Women: Success Strategies in Law Firms
April 28, 2011

Claudette Christian, Partner & Co-Chair of the Board, Hogan Lovells LLP

Nicole Dogwill, Partner, Winston & Strawn LLP

Jennifer Hernandez, Partner, Holland and Knight

Moderator: Kisha Nunez, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen and Katz

Top 10 Success Strategies for Diverse Women

1. **Take ownership of your work.** It is a given that most attorneys work hard, but it is important to take ownership of your work. Do the best you can with whatever project you are given. The more ownership one takes, the more responsibility and exposure they will be given at an earlier stage in their career.
2. **Communicate effectively.** It is really important to make sure you understand what is expected of you, and to be honest about questions and issues you have upfront. Both junior and senior lawyers can sometimes be such poor communicators. Lack of communication leads to misunderstandings and disappointments that really didn't have to happen in the first place.
3. **Establish a good mentoring relationship.** This is vital, especially in a large law firm.
4. **Network.** Get out of your office, and meet people from your own office as well as the others. This expands your network and gives you greater exposure to interesting and challenging work.
5. **It's all about clients.** Learn their business, learn what they need not what you've been taught to write, and recognize that they're paying you for creative and cost-effective solutions.
6. **Get outside the office.** Join a client-based trade association that meets monthly or quarterly in your area, and make attending these events and ascending in the leadership of the organization as high a priority as your favorite and most pressing work assignment.
7. **Get to know and support your peers.** Going out of your way to nurture collegiality and create friendships with the women of color that you encounter as part of your career should become deep bonds, and will help take you through your career's inevitable low points and can help you soar to higher peaks.
8. **Invest in yourself and let others know you are doing so.** Others will not invest in you if you don't first do it.
9. **Seek out sponsors and not merely mentors.** Sponsors will invest with you in your future and will communicate your virtues to others.
10. **Play to your strengths.** You will be a better professional and happier person.

Please Turn Over



Top Strategies for Law Firms

1. **Develop and review measurement tools.** Firm systems like recruiting, associate hours, retention rates and work flow to name a few, should be tracked and analyzed, holding group or process leaders accountable for inequities among diverse women.
2. **Grow critical mass.** Active outreach to diverse women should be sustained through recruiting efforts.
3. **Encourage leadership.** Diverse women should be supported in developing their leadership skills through activities both inside and outside the firm. Opportunities inside the firm should not just be relegated to the diversity committee or affinity groups.
4. **Create and utilize development plans.** This way junior lawyers can use this to monitor their skills and knowledge base as they track their success.
5. **Communicate firm leaders' commitment.** This message about diversity and inclusion at the firm should be done regularly and repeatedly.
6. **Develop meaningful mentoring opportunities.** Channels should be made available for inclusive formal and informal mentoring and networking programs. Access to key clients and senior partners is imperative and should be sustainable.
7. **Ensure a fair system for evaluations.** Attorneys conducting performance evaluations should be trained to evaluate in an open, effective and unbiased manner.
8. **Create an inclusive firm succession plan.** This should integrate diverse senior associates and junior partners in key firm management committees.