



Small Firms Make Headlines

“BigLaw Lawyers Jump to Small Firms, Law’s Fastest Growing Sector” *ABA Law Journal News*

“The Big Opportunities in the Legal Profession are at Small Firms” *LA Times*

“small firms are the largest and fastest growing sector of the legal community” ¹.

–¹ Laura Farber, small firm partner and vice-chair of the ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division



Small Firms = Big Market



Presenters

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Our Path Today

Who works in small firms?

What do small firms want from a young lawyer?

How can students “stand out” to small firms?

How can CSOs market their law schools to small firms?



Who Works in Small Firms Nationally

- **Class 2009**

- 55% private practice
 - Almost 50% employed with firm < 50 attorneys

- **Licensed attorneys:**

- 80% employed with firm < 50 lawyers

- The ABA GPSSF Section's survey reveals that 86% of today's law students EXPECT to practice in small firms.



Who Works in Small Firms Regionally

Size Firm	Nationally	Florida
1-10	38.80%	48.80%
11-25	7.60%	11.80%
26-100	9.20%	11.00%
101-250	7.00%	5.70%
251+	32.90%	7.60%



Demographics in Your Area?

- NALP : *JD's & Jobs, Class of 2009*
 - Chart page 31 , “Distribution of Jobs Taken by Size of Law Firm” – breakdown by state & by selected cities on page 32
- State Bar Associations
- Survey of Law Firm Economics



Common hiring traits for small firms

- Small firms hire whenever the need arises.
 - No set hiring cycle
 - No summer associate programs
 - No Hiring Committee
 - Less likely to recruit during OCI
 - Less likely to pay to advertise
- **80% of the openings are advertised by word-of-mouth.**



What Small Firms Want From a Young Lawyer

Attorney Perspectives – video

- Job search suggestions
- Timing for obtaining small firm position
- Is experience the first thing employers look for?
- How does the business model apply to small firms?

Questions?





What Small Firms Want From a Young Lawyer

Core Competencies:

- 1) Relationship skills (fit)
- 2) Understand how to add value
- 3) Entrepreneurial spirit
- 4) Prepared to hit the ground running
- 5) Effective communicator
- 6) Problem solver
- 7) Ability to build a strong reputation



Ways students can “stand out” to a Small Firm

- Have a “can-do” attitude
- Play to strengths
- Be trainable
- Demonstrable work ethic
- Be fearless in accepting responsibility
- Target firms in cover letter
- Send hard copies of resumes/cover letters (vs. emails)



Ways students can “stand out” to a Small Firm

Core Competencies

Maturity

(Average age 1L = 23-24)



Ways students can “stand out” to a Small Firm

Core Competencies

How do we, as CSO's, foster maturity in students?

- Professional Expectations
- Accountability & responsibility
- Teach “Purposeful Networking”
- Feedback
- Self-assessment

Ways students can “stand out” to a Small Firm

A Hypothetical
Situation...

By Linda and
Samantha





Ways students can “stand out” to a small firm

How do we, as CSO's, foster maturity in students?

FOLLOW UP!

(see Handout)



Ways students can “stand out” to a Small Firm

**Your ideas on
how to foster maturity in students?**

- 1) Mandatory 5-hour Professionalism Seminar for 1Ls (penalty for not attending is being blocked from Symplicity).**

Questions?





How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

1. Provide helpful information to attorneys!

Susan Gainen's two articles for employers in *Lawyerist.com*:

- "Hiring a Law Clerk? Ask Yourself These Questions First"
July 12, 2010
- "Hire the Right Law Clerk: 4 Steps" December 27, 2010



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

Linda Calvert Hanson's articles for employers:

- “Maximizing your Valuable Time” appeared in the FL 8th *Judicial Circuit Bar News & FL Bar, Journal of the GPPSF, FL Law Practice Link*
- “The Law School Perspective of Small Firm Practice” appeared in the FL Bar, *Journal of the GPPSF, FL Law Practice Link*



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

2. Identify national and state bar associations that target small firms:

- State Bar Small Firm Guide (handout)
- ABA: GP Solo, Small Firm Division – Law Student Membership
- Florida Bar Section on General Practice, Solo, & Small Firm (GPSSF) - Law Student Membership



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

3. Get involved with events that cater to small firms:

- **ABA:** GP Solo, Small Firm Division – Annual Conference
- **Florida:** FL Bar GPSSF 5th Annual Solo & Small Firm Conference – April, 2011 in Weston
- **Louisiana:** Annual LSBA Solo & Small Firm Conference - February, 2011 in New Orleans
- **Missouri:** 16th Annual Missouri Bar, Solo & Small Firm Conference - June, 2011
- **Wisconsin:** Solo & Small Firm Conference – October, 2011
- **New York City Bar:** Jumping in and Staying Afloat in Your Solo or Small Firm Practice



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

4. Contact state or local bar associations with a focus on small firms – facilitate interaction by:

- Offering assistance with their events or CLE's - no-cost space
- Hosting a lunch or networking reception
- Attending small firm luncheons
- Hosting a membership drive



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

5. Partner with a vendor that caters to smaller firms

- Lexis/Nexis, Martindale.com partnership

6. Create a small firm section in local bar or regional bar if none exist



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

7. Create a Small Firm Attorney Advisory Committee



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

8. Solicit small firm attorney participation



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

9. Conduct Targeted Marketing Efforts

- Specifically tailor look & content of your marketing materials
- Obtain mailing lists
 - SSF section membership may open access to database
 - Consider purchasing list or
 - Create it



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

10. How have other CSO's marketed their schools?

- Cumberland: Solo & Small Firm Success CLE
- Georgetown: Small firm Mix & Mingle
- UCLA: Small-Mid Sized Firm Reception
- Cardoza: Small Law Firm Spring Recruiting Fair
- OK: Brunch with a Lawyer
- Southwestern: Small Law Firm Day



How can CSO's market their schools to Small Firms?

**Other ways YOU
have marketed your law school and
its students to small firms?**



What we accomplished today

Who Works in Small Firms:

- Nationally & Regionally
- Common Hiring Traits

What small firms want from a young lawyer

- Core competencies

Steps students can take to “stand out” to a small firm

- Foster maturity

How can CSOs market their law schools to small firms?

- Provide useful information and services
- Create opportunities for interaction and build relationships



Small Firms = **Big** Market