

Scenario 1

Adele Spencer is an Assistant Director of Career Services in a small, regional, private law school. She has been in her position for three years. The Career Services Office is comprised of two Assistant Directors, one Associate Director and one Director. Adele enjoys her job very much and has received excellent performance appraisals.

Adele would like to increase her areas and level of responsibility and be promoted to an Associate Director position (which also happens to pay money). However, she is unsure how to approach the topic with her boss, the Director of Career Services. Both the Director and Associate Director have been with the school for many years, and there is no expectation that they will leave anytime soon. Also, while Adele has been in her position two years longer than the other Assistant Director, she does not want to snub her counterpart (with whom she gets along very well). Adele's hesitance to approach her boss about a promotion is further compounded by the fact that she does not have a real understanding of how her promotion would affect the office budget and whether it's financially feasible, especially given today's economic climate. In sum, Adele is nervous about asking for a promotion and raise when people are being told to be thankful they have jobs, period.

How would you suggest that Adele proceed?

What do you think is the best way for Adele to approach her boss to discuss increasing her responsibilities and being promoted?

What are some solutions (aside looking for another position) if her boss does not seem willing to increase her responsibilities and/or support her promotion?

Scenario 2

Archie Leach is the Legal Recruiting Coordinator for a large law firm in New York City. The Legal Recruiting Department has an administrative assistant, two coordinators, a manager and a director. Archie joined the department as the Legal Recruiting Assistant and after three years, was promoted to Legal Recruiting Coordinator. He has held his current role for three years, and all of his performance reviews have been very positive. Since being promoted, he has attended the NALP conference each year.

Several years ago, Archie was nominated and elected to the position of Treasurer of the local city group. He successfully juggled the demands of both his job and the Treasurer's position. After serving as Treasurer for the local city group, he was nominated to run for the Nominating Committee of NALP. He discussed the opportunity with his manager, and both agreed it was not the right time for him to accept that nomination. He didn't feel he was ready for the Nominating Committee. Last year he was nominated to run for Regional Representative. Archie was very excited about the opportunity and discussed it with his manager who did not approve his request to accept the nomination. He has been nominated to run for Regional Coordinator again but is concerned his manager may not approve.

What advice do you have for Archie?

How can he prepare for the discussion with his manager?

Should he talk with the Director?

Scenario 3

Anna Bates works at an organization (law school or law firm) that is well-established and handles things in a particularly hierarchical manner when it comes to communications and participation in meetings and on committees. Anna finds herself participating in meetings even when the focus of such meetings are outside her area of expertise, and there are others on her team who are now responsible for those areas. For the most part, Anna has talented staff members with great experience who are eager to get exposure. However, Anna does have one staff member who can be over eager and ambitious. This “whipper snapper” has a strong, self interested streak and tends to question Anna’s authority in front of others on the team and at times can be argumentative, thinking her way is best. The “whipper snapper” likes to be seen as the go-to person and makes decisions that make Anna concerned about her judgment.

How can Anna encourage her Dean/Hiring Partner/Chief Talent Officer to recognize and include these team members?

How can she begin to direct calls and questions to other members of her team without coming across as unhelpful (or worse, as if she doesn't know what is going on) so that her team members can begin to build the credibility needed to perform their jobs and gain visibility while allowing her to focus on the other responsibilities that she has?

How can Anna handle it when she gets a call that someone is dissatisfied with the response from a team member, both when they may have a reason to be dissatisfied and also when they don't?

Are there other ways that Anna, as the senior member, can raise the visibility of others on her staff?

How can she manage staff frustration if this does not come to pass? Is there a possible middle ground solution?

With regards to the “whipper snapper” on Anna’s team, how would you recommend Anna mentor and guide her?

Also, how does Anna remain confident that the department is running how she thinks best, but still encourage and gather input from her team?