

Effective Career Counseling for Associates in Transition

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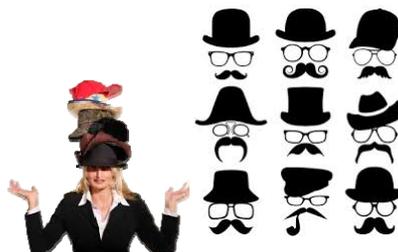
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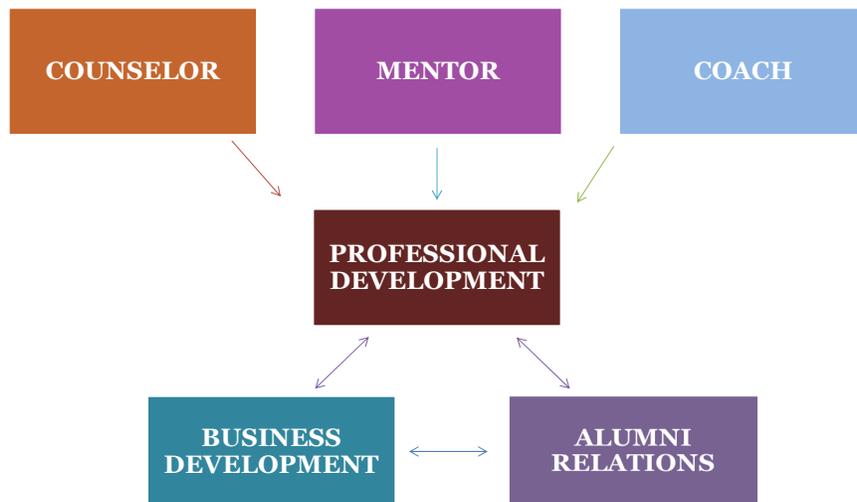


WHAT is Career Counseling?

- One-on-one or in a group setting
- Confidential
- Covers many topics



Multifaceted Concept



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Mentoring, Coaching, Counseling

Mentoring

- Rooted in advice
- Teaching and guidance
- Mentor shares own experience

Coaching

- Open-ended questions
- Coach does not problem-solve
- Future-Focused
- Coach does not share personal experiences

Counseling

- Questions and Advice
- Can discuss past/history
- Counselor does not share personal experiences

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Compelling Case for In-House Counseling of Associates & Alumni

- **WHY** should the firm invest in career counseling?
- **HOW** does career counseling align with the firm's long and short-term goals?
- **WHERE** should career counseling be housed?
- **WHO** should be a career counselor?
- **WHEN** is a good time to start or enhance your program?
- **WHICH** challenges will you encounter?
- **WHAT** benefits does counseling offer?

Why?
How?
Where?
Who?
When?
Which?
What?



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WHY Do It?



Professional & Career Development

- Aids associates with their career plans
- Encourages associates to be proactive and take control of their careers
- Manages expectations

Morale

- Increases engagement
- Builds goodwill and alumni loyalty

Using your law firm's "degree"

- Helps associates get the best positions at the right time, with the potential to become clients

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WHY Do It? (cont'd)

Partner Participation

- Develops more of a “stake” in associates’ careers
- Associates feel more accountable
- Partners feel more engaged being part of the transition process
- Partners keep associates in mind for openings



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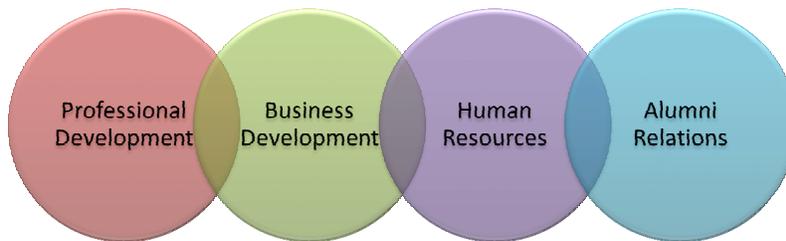
HOW Does an In-House Counselor Align with the Firm’s Goals?

- Counselor understands the firm’s culture and the players
- Associates often feel more comfortable talking about their career with staff than partners
- Confidential meetings; no repercussions
- Less or later turnover



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WHERE Should Your Program be Housed?



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WHO Should be a Career Counselor?

- No specialized degree needed; experience is valuable
- Trustworthy and reputable
- Able to listen and communicate effectively
- Understands the firm culture and players
- Does not have to be a stand alone position



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WHEN Should You Start or Enhance Your Counseling Program

- Before launching a program you need:
 - “Buy-in” from senior management
 - Use firm and alumni websites as launch pads
 - Announce the position to all lawyers
- Each firm is unique, but you may want to...
 - Meet regularly with practice group coordinators
 - Look at performance reviews
 - Work with Business Development team to provide advice



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Enhance Your Counseling Program by Promoting External Opportunities

- Job boards
 - Internal job board
 - Alumni site
- Clearinghouse functions
- Distribution lists
- Targeted emails
- Career referral relationships with clients
- Use of Alumni Directory



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WHICH Challenges Might You Expect?

Partners hesitant to help associates leave the Firm

Launching a job board

- Transparency
- Associates applying outside of the formal process
- Unqualified associates making bad impressions
- Managing the job board



In-house Counseling

- Budget
- Partners wanting control of associates' career development
- Management understanding the full potential
- Developing essential trust between the counselor and associates
- Delicate balance between wearing different "hats" – counselor, administrator

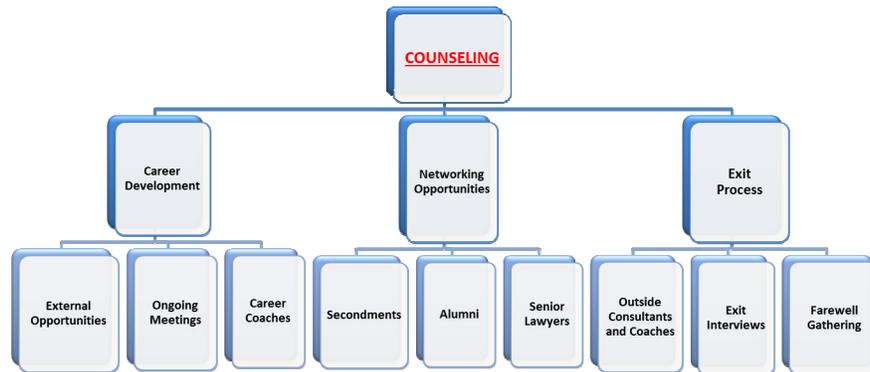
WHICH Challenges Might You Expect?(cont'd)

Collaboration between different departments

- Alumni Relations, Business Development, Diversity Group, Human Resources, Legal Recruiting and Professional Development
- Assist with client and alumni outreach
- Different priorities



Best Practices



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Best Practices (cont'd)

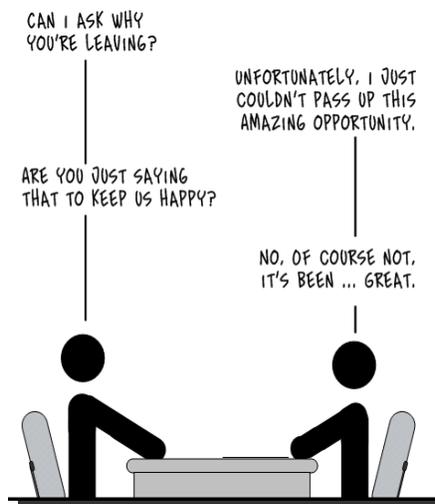
- Prepare in advance of meeting
- Make associates feel at ease
- Explain your role
- Discuss confidentiality
- Ask open ended questions
- Take limited notes
 - You can fill in more notes after the session
- End with action items
- Schedule next session



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The Exit Interview – Sample Topics

- Assignments
- Feedback/Reviews
- Firm culture
- Mentoring
- Morale
- Pro bono
- Training



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The Exit Interview: Tips!

- ✓ Prepare questions ahead of time
- ✓ Make the meeting a dialogue
- ✓ Reaffirm that the meeting is confidential; explain any caveats (non-attributable)
- ✓ Request suggestions for improvement for the firm and practice areas
- ✓ Register departing associates on the alumni website
- ✓ Offer alumni-branded swag
- ✓ How to use the valuable information gained from the interview



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Mock Scenario: What Would **YOU** Do?

{Instructions: Divide into groups of 2-3 and discuss how you would deal with one of the scenarios given for 3 minutes. Brainstorm your approach and potential challenges that may arise.}

Scenario 1: An associate with whom you have had limited interaction comes into your office after receiving a message about having no future at the firm. How would you handle this discussion?

Scenario 2: A well-regarded associate, who shows great promise, asks to meet with you because she is having thoughts about leaving the firm. What would your approach be to counseling this associate?

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WHAT Benefits Does Career Counseling Offer: The Wrap-Up

- Seems counterintuitive, but very advantageous
- Should be an integral part of career development programs
- Making external opportunities available and transparent can show that partners are committed to associates' long-term careers
- Counseled associates are more engaged and will become loyal alumni
- Professional Development, Alumni Relations and Counseling Services should work together



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Let Us Hear Your Questions!



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