



The Future of Legal Workplace Advisory Group Innovative Ideas for **Effective and Engaging Lawyer Professional Development Programming In a Hybrid Environment**

The Future of Legal Workplace Advisory Group continues to use our pulse survey results to provide resources for our members' most pressing needs. We know the overwhelming majority of our law firm professional development members are seeking ways to thrive in a hybrid environment – ways that capitalize on the benefits that remote work offers while maintaining a high standard of professional development for our attorneys. As we continue to adapt to the permanency of a hybrid work environment, law firms are faced with the challenge of ensuring that our training programs effectively prepare lawyers for the changing landscape of the legal profession.

In that vein, we offer some ideas on how to offer effective and engaging programming.

- **Be thoughtful and intentional when selecting the program format. Consider creating and utilizing a decision matrix to determine whether each program should be offered in person, virtually, hybrid, or even asynchronously on demand. Factors to consider including in your firm's decision matrix:**
 - Who is presenting? Is the presenter a keynote speaker, member of firm management, significant business generator, outside consultant, or a member of the firm's business staff, etc.?
 - Is the information being conveyed as a lecture or is there an interactive/experiential component? Consider using a "flipped classroom" approach (see below).
 - Who is the intended audience (e.g., specific practice groups, specific level of associates) and what are the norms for that group's working arrangement? Are all the members of that group located or based in one office or across many?
 - What are you hoping to achieve through the program (e.g., convey knowledge or an update in the law, discuss ideas, build a skill, create connections.)?
 - Does the session include emotionally sensitive material or topics?

- Is there another event occurring at the firm on the same day of the training that would lend the training to an in-person event?
- What are the technology and audiovisual capabilities of your available in-person and/or virtual space (e.g., will boardroom cameras allow for a clear view and audio of speaker(s)/presenter(s) for all participants? Is there software you can use to poll in-person and virtual participants?)
- Does your intended audience need assistive technology (e.g., closed captioning) and does the format you are considering support that need?
- **Establish and clearly communicate norms for programming and consistently enforce them.** Norms should be established for each type of programming format and included in the email invitation for each program. Norms to consider for your firm's programming:
 - **In person only programming** – e.g., all attendees should be present no later than 10 minutes after the start of the program, should refrain from utilizing technology (unless for note taking purposes), and should remain for the duration of the program unless there's an emergency.
 - **Virtual programming** – e.g., all attendees should be logged on no later than 10 minutes of the start of the program, should expect to have their cameras on and their microphones muted unless otherwise instructed, should participate in small group discussions (if offered), and should refrain from utilizing technology unless for note taking purposes or use of the virtual presentation platform.
 - **Hybrid programming** – e.g., all attendees should be logged on or present within 10 minutes of the start of the program, both in person and remote attendees should log on virtually so that everyone can see each other, attendees should refrain from utilizing technology unless for note taking purposes or use of the virtual presentation format, and all attendees should participate in interactive portions of the program with the intention of including both remote and in person attendees equally in discussions.
- **Carefully consider the duration of the programming, as well as the best date and time to offer programming.**
 - Does this program require a full hour? Can it be compressed into a shorter session that will be easier for participants to attend or that could be added to the agenda of a group's regularly scheduled meeting?
 - Rotate the days of week and timing of programming to ensure that you are making programs available to as many attendees as possible and to be mindful of attendees who may have a regularly scheduled meeting that would conflict with a scheduled

- training. If applicable, capitalize on “anchor days” to schedule in person programming for attendees.
- Refrain from scheduling virtual programming on “anchor days” to allow attorneys to leverage the full benefits of in office interactions.
 - Consider other non-billable firm activities on the day or week you are targeting.
- **Offer “flipped classroom” programming.** Flipped classrooms provide for advanced asynchronous review of material that would normally be background information presented as a lecture. Then, utilize the live programming to build skills, discuss, collaborate, and/or answer questions.
 - **Maximize engagement in virtual programming.** Utilize virtual platform features like polling, questions in chat, and white boards to keep attendees engaged. Utilize breakout features in the middle of programming and not at the end. Attendees are more likely to leave a virtual program that has a breakout session at the end when there is no formal programming provided after the breakout.
 - **When possible record all programming** to allow those who are unable to attend (regardless of format) to benefit from access to the information and material. Ensure that presenters and audiences are aware that the program will be recorded. Consider having a central repository for all recorded programs or provide clear instructions about how to access the recording. Use closed captioning for all recordings.

The Future of Legal Workplace Advisory Group would like to thank the volunteers of the Lawyer PD Section for their collaboration to create this resource of Innovative Ideas.