PD Quarterly February 2011

Competency Models: An Update
Gaye Mara

With competency models taking center stage at the NALP PD Institute in December, and also in the ongoing follow-up to the ALI-ABA/ACLEA Critical Issues Summit, it seems time for us to take a fresh look at the status of law offices' involvement with these new models. Our view is aided by two recent surveys of law firms on the subject, one by the NALP Foundation in 2009 (see the list of references appended to this article for this and the other publications cited) and one by us reported in the following article.

The Evolving Law Firm Competency Model

Elements of the Model

The law firm competency model seems to be evolving very much along the lines of the template laid out by Peter Sloan in his 2002 book and 2003 *PDQ* article about the competency model created at Blackwell Sanders (now Hulse Blackwell). The three elements in that model are:

1. **Firm-wide core competencies:** Generic, formally defined performance expectations that apply to lawyers in all the firm's practice specialties, and that typically are modeled on the key capabilities and behaviors that the firm sees as contributing most to its success. Legal Writing, for example,

might be a firm-wide core competency for which detailed performance expectations would be specified.

2. **Practice-area benchmarks:** Designated experience milestones specific to each practice specialty, which mark the lawyer's progress in mastering the specialty and often in mastering the core competencies as well. For example, drafting specified types of litigation or transactional documents might be some of the writing-related benchmarks in a given practice group.

3. **Levels:** Designated stages of progressively rising performance expectations leading to full mastery of the core competencies and accomplishment of all the applicable practice-area benchmarks. Depending on the firm, there may be anywhere from 3 to 5 levels (Sloan's model had 4), beginning with basic expectations for beginning lawyers at Level 1. In the most fully developed systems, a lawyer's compensation and billing rate rises in tandem with his/her progress up the levels.

On Competencies and Competency Models

The term *competency* can be confusing. At the same time, it is intuitively appealing.

What it strives to capture is something we would all like to better understand and replicate: that elusive combination of innate and learned capacities, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that go into the making of a star performer. Perhaps the closest synonyms are *KSAs* (*Knowledge*, *Skills*, and either *Abilities* or *Attitudes* depending on the source) or *KSAOs* (add *Other* to the preceding list). Both acronyms were coined years ago by the corporate training industry.

What I like about *competency* is that it's a single word that rolls up all those concepts into one seemingly tidy ball. But it's a ball that incorporates many different strands.

For PD purposes (including mentoring, training, and developmental assignments), we separate out and address the learned (or learnable) strands from the rest of the ball. For management decisions (like hiring, advancement, partnership selection) the challenge is simpler. We want the whole ball. We want to identify the "best" people, bring them into our organizations, and move them into the positions where they can do the most for us.

With competency modeling, the challenge is to define all the components of "best" in your organization – clearly and completely. Add to that a Levels system, and you have taken on the further challenge of defining all the intermediate stops on the road to "best."

– Gaye Mara

Typical Core Competencies

Drawing on the published models (see the References), we have compiled the most common competency categories used in law firms. While the organization and terminology will vary, you can expect to see the following broad categories included in every law firm model:

- Communications (written and oral)
- Research and analysis
- Client service and business development
- Interpersonal skills and teamwork
- Management of people and projects
- Professionalism/ethics

One or another of the following, less common categories will appear in most models (again, terminology will vary):

- Substantive legal knowledge/development in specialty
- Firm citizenship
- Community service
- Judgment
- Work ethic

How the Elements Fit Together

To illustrate how the three elements in the model – competencies, benchmarks, and levels – are supposed to fit together, let's expand the previous Legal Writing examples and look at possible firm-wide core competency definitions and writing-related benchmarks for a Level 1 associate in the Real Estate Group. The following are abbreviated versions adapted from published models cited in the Reference list:

Firm-Wide Core Competency, Legal Writing (Level 1)

- Drafts documents free from errors of grammar, usage, and spelling
- Demonstrates attention to detail

- Treats e-mails as written work product
- Presents ideas clearly, concisely, and in an organized manner[1]

(From Mottershead at 84)

Writing-Related Benchmarks, Real Estate Group (Level 1)

- Prepare first draft of a standard residential or non-complex commercial lease
- Prepare first drafts of non-complex real estate purchase or sale contracts
- Prepare initial drafts of routine closing documents for a non-complex sale

(From Sloane 2002 at 61-62)

Ideally, a real estate associate who has met these sorts of basic expectations for *all* the Level 1 competencies and benchmarks would now be ready to move up to Level 2 and a more advanced set of expectations – along with a correspondingly higher salary and billing rate. In this sort of level system, in theory, law school class year is irrelevant; and advancement is based instead on achievement of the competencies and benchmarks.

Notice that quality standards are embedded in the core competency definition (which uses terms like *free from errors, clear, concise, organized*) yet are absent from the benchmarks, which constitute more of a check-off list without reference to the quality of the work product. In many firms, the competency definitions function also as performance appraisal criteria, unchanged except for the addition of a rating scale. (Indeed, the appraisal criteria at firms have always served as an implicit competency model.)

---

[1]For another approach to legal writing as a competency, see our interview with Ross Guberman on pp. 21-24 of this issue.

Prevalence of Law Firm Competency Models

The July 2009 NALP survey confirmed the strength of the trend toward competency models in law firms, finding that 74% of the responding firms had core competencies either in place, in development, or planned (p. 5); likewise, 57% had or planned to implement bench-marks (p. 10). *PDQ*'s more recent survey, of a smaller sample of somewhat larger firms, produced different percentages but still showed majorities having or transitioning to both competencies and benchmarks (see pp. 8-10 in the following survey report).

Corporations made the move to competency models well before law firms; a major study and literature review found that by 1996-98, 75-80% of corporations had competency applications in place (Shippmann at 704). However, the corporate models applied only to management positions. They were used primarily for management development and succession planning, and were accompanied by other intensive programs such as leadership training, assessment centers with scenario-based testing and observation, 360-degree feedback programs, and so forth.

In government, the only competency model for lawyers we have been able to discover is a leadership competency model that we are told is in development at the U.S. Department of Justice. Thus it seems that the Federal Government is following a similar path to that of the corporations and focusing attention at the top.

Interestingly, law firms have taken a bottom-up approach to competency modeling , the opposite of the corporate approach. As assumed in the NALP survey and explicitly confirmed by our own survey, nearly all the law firm models apply only to associates (sometimes including staff attorneys) and not to partners. The initial driver for the creation of the models seems to have been developmental – for associate training and career development – and to have come

primarily from the PD function in firms. On the NALP survey report, the top-scoring answer to the question "How do you currently use or plan to use core competencies?" was "Professional development initiatives" at 94% (NALP at 6).

I think corporations decided to limit their attention to the top because the type of program they mounted – not just the competency model itself, but all the associated development and assessment programs – is labor- and cost-intensive, and focusing on a limited number of key positions promised the best return on the investment. High cost is also true of many law firm programs, and one would think that making that investment in partners as well as – or even instead of – associates could be justi-fied, particularly for those in firm manage-ment roles. A competency model for practice group chairs would be a good pilot project.

Applications of Competencies and Benchmarks

What can competencies and benchmarks accomplish? A coherent and well-implemented system can provide a unifying framework for all aspects of developing and managing a firm's human assets, including:

- competency-based interviewing of candidates for employment
- a training curriculum that focuses on development of the competencies
- mentoring, career development, and self-assessment by reference to the competencies and benchmarks
- work allocation to support accomplishment of the competencies and benchmarks and/or to ensure the necessary level of competence
- competency-based performance appraisal criteria
- compensation, advancement, and partnership selection based on accomplishment of the appropriate competencies and benchmarks

Both NALP's survey and ours indicate that to varying degrees firms are using competency models in all these ways.

Cautions and Challenges

Here are some issues to be addressed by any firm considering a competency model:

The Need for Competence in Competency Modeling

We found one statistic in the NALP survey truly alarming: To date, only 18% of the responding firms have engaged or decided to engage consultants to help them develop their competency models. Worse, that percentage is even smaller for firms of under 500 lawyers, the firms that are least likely to have any kind of internal expertise in competency modeling. (NALP at 9).

Competency models are complicated systems with a lot of interlocking parts. More important, they are the systems responsible for managing and developing firms' single most essential asset: their professional competence and expertise. To assign the project of developing such a complicated and critical system to people, no matter how smart, who don't know what they are doing and who must do it in the spare time taken from their real jobs, seems foolish if not suicidal.

Level of Detail

Some of the early competency models developed in corporations had to be scrapped because they were so detailed they (a) could not accommodate all the variations in individual situations and (b) required constant updating. At the same time, competencies and benchmarks must be detailed enough to be clear as to what is expected, for the benefit of everyone who must rely on them to assess or develop performance. Another point in favor of having the job done by someone who knows what they are doing.

Extraordinary vs. Consistent

In my experience, the people with the greatest strengths also have significant weaknesses. Yet the Levels systems in firms assume a completely synchronous progression – that associates will satisfy all the expectations of Level 1 in all the competencies before moving up to Level 2, and so on up the line. If the system contains no mechanism for accommodating any area of weakness, firms may be cheating themselves of some extraordinary strengths. That's what teams are about, putting together people with complementary strengths who can make up for each other's weaknesses.

Cost/Benefit Analysis

The proper design and implementation of a firm-wide competency model, and its integration into all the firm's other programs and systems, can involve the entire firm in an intensive effort for up to 2 years. That is not a project to be undertaken without first carefully weighing the benefits against the costs.

Two of the respondents to our survey (p. 9 below) said they have affirmatively decided against developing core competency models. Both are firms of over 500 lawyers that we have known in the past to be well and thoughtfully managed. We suspect their decision came down to, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Especially not when the fix would involve such extreme effort and expense.

Legal Validity

There is some question about the ability of personnel decisions based on a core competency model to survive a legal challenge (Shippmann at 730). We are not aware of any cases on the issue, but undoubtedly they will come as utilization of these models spreads.

Conclusion

If you are considering a competency model at your firm, or are simply curious about what one might involve, we hope this article has given you some food for thought. Such a model promises great benefits, but the challenges are significant.

We look forward to tracking future developments as firms gain experience with these models.

REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Bernthal, Paul R., et al., *ASTD Competency Study: Mapping the Future.* 2004: American Society for Training and Development, Alexandria, VA.

Bock, Heather, and Lori Berman, "Building and Using an Associate Competency Model."

Gaye Mara is Publisher and Managing Editor of PD Quarterly. *She can be reached at* maraeg@profdev.com *or 703-719-7030.*

August 2006: *Professional Development Quarterly.*

Bock, Heather, and Robert Ruyak,, *Constructing Core Competencies: Using Competency Models to Manage Firm Talent.* 2007: American Bar Association, Chicago, IL.

Chitwood, Stephen R., et al., *A Business Skills Curriculum for Law Firm Associates.* 2001: Association of Legal Administrators, Vernon Hills, IL.

McCarthy, Siobhain, et al., "Superior Performance: Managing Through Competencies." 2010: conference handout from the *NALP/ALI-ABA Professional Development Institute.*

Mottershead, Terri, Editor, *The Art and Science of Strategic Talent Management in Law Firms.* 2010: West Publishing, Eagan, MN.

NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education, *Survey of Law Firm Use of Core Competencies and Benchmarking in Associate Compensation and Advancement Structures.* July 2009 research report.

Shippmann, Jeffery S., et al, "The Practice of Competency Modeling." 2000: *Personnel Psychology* 53.

Sloan, Peter B., *From Classes to Competencies, Lockstep to Levels.* 2007 Edition: Blackwell Sanders LLP, Kansas City, MO.

Sloan, Peter, "From Lockstep to Levels." August 2003: *Professional Development Quarterly.*

Westfahl, Scott A., *You Get What You Measure: Lawyer Development Frameworks and Effective Evaluations.* 2008: National Association for Law Placement, Inc., Washington, DC.

Competencies, Benchmarks, and Assessments in Law Firms

Gaye Mara

In early January we invited 117 law firms in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. to answer a short questionnaire about the extent to which they base, or plan to base, their performance appraisals, hiring interviews, and other types of assessments on firm-wide core competencies and practice-area benchmarks.

Sixteen firms (14%) returned a completed questionnaire. We're told that is a respectable response rate to a survey these days, though certainly we had hoped for more responses. We are most grateful to those of you who took the time to participate. We hope you will find the survey results informative.

This report will profile:

1. the firms that responded to our survey;
2. the status and longevity of core competency and benchmark templates at the firms, and the categories of personnel to which those templates apply; and

3. the extent to which the responding firms are using core competencies and benchmarks to assess lawyers' performance, progress, and potential.

Each of the following sections begins with a summary description of the "average" respondent – that is, a profile created from all the answers on our survey questionnaire that were selected by over 50% of the respondents. Each also includes a table charting the answers of all respondents as a group and by firm size, along with comments highlighting the data that seem especially worth noting.

1. The Responding Firms

The average survey respondent is a U.S.-based law firm with 100-500 lawyers and 3-10 offices, all in the U.S. All the firms in our sample had 100 or more lawyers. Table 1 below gives the breakdown for all respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Profile			
Number of Lawyers	**<100**: 0 (0%)	**100-500:** 11 (69%)	**>500:** 5 (31%)
Number of Offices	**<3:** 2 (12.5%)	**3-10:** 12 (75%)	**>10:** 2 (12.5%)
Number of Countries	**1:** 11 (69%)	**2-4:** 3 (19%)	**5 or more:** 2 (12.5%)

2. Status of Core Competencies and Benchmarks

The average respondent has both firm-wide core competencies and practice-specific benchmarks in place, and applies both templates to associates at all levels but not to other attorneys. Its firm-wide core competency model is new (less than 2 years old). Its practice benchmarks, by contrast, have been in place for over 3 years, but perhaps not in all practice areas. See Tables 2 and 3 below for details on the status and coverage of core competencies and benchmarks, respectively, for all respondents.

Note in Table 2 that in addition to all associates, three of the responding firms apply or will apply their firm-wide core competency models to staff attorneys, two firms to non-equity partners, and one firm to equity partners and firm leadership as well. But no respondents plan to apply practice-area benchmarks to attorneys above the level of associate (see Table 3). That may be due to the fact that, even within a single practice specialty, partners can establish individual practice niches that are extremely varied, whereas associates have a common need for the kinds of experiences that will develop basic and broad expertise in the specialty.

Note also that two of the responding firms have affirmatively decided against developing core competencies (Table 2) and two against developing benchmarks (Table 3).

A. Firm-Wide Core Competencies

In answer to our question about the status of core competencies in their firms, one respondent who checked "In development" and another who checked "Decided to develop" explained that they are revising existing programs:

> We developed a "skills matrix" for attorneys in 2008. We are currently working on revising it to align it with benchmarks, professional training programs and our evaluation process.
>
> *
>
> Something like a competency system is in place at my firm, but it needs a review and more development.

We therefore decided to combine the three status categories "Already in place," "In development," and "Decided to develop" in reporting the status of core competencies. We renamed the combined category "In place/in development/planned/in revision" as shown below in Table 2.

B. Practice-Area Benchmarks

As shown below in Table 3, more firms (12, or 75% of all respondents) have practice-area benchmarks in place or planned, and the in-place benchmark templates have been there longer (8 out of 10 of them, or 80%, for 3 or more years), than is the case with core competencies. Only 62% (10) of the responding firms have implemented or plan to implement core competency models (see Table 2), and the great majority of the core competency models actually in place (6 out of 8, or 75%) are 2 years old or less.

Table 2. Firm-Wide Core Competencies: Status and Affected Personnel			
Status	**All respondents (16)**	**Firms of >500 lawyers (5)**	**Firms of 100-500 lawyers (11)**
In place/in development/ planned/in revision.	10 (62%)	3 (60%)	7 (64%)
How long in place:			
<1 year	3 (18%)	0	3 (27%)
1-2 years	3 (18%)	2 (40%)	1 (9%)
3-4 years	1 (6%)	0	1 (9%)
5+ years	1 (6%)	0	1 (9%)
Under consideration	3 (18%)	0	3 (27%)
Not yet considering	1 (6%)	0	1 (9%)
Decided against developing	2 (12%)	2 (40%)	0
Personnel affected or to be affected	**All firms with competencies in place or planned (10)**	**Firms of >500 lawyers (3)**	**Firms of 100-500 lawyers (7)**
All associates[2]	10 (100%)	3 (100%)	7 (100%)
Staff attorneys	3 (30%)	1 (33%)	2 (29%)
Non-equity partners	2 (20%)	1 (33%)	0
Equity partners	1 (10%)	0	1 (14%)
Firm administrators	0	0	0
Firm leaders	1 (10%)	0	1 (14%)

Note in Table 3 below that the larger firms (>500 lawyers) have had better success in getting all the practice groups in the firm to define experience benchmarks.

One PD officer described the status of her firm's new benchmark program as follows, adding a piece of advice for others:

All Practice Groups articulated benchmarks. Several appear to have started to use them in setting individual Development Priorities for associates in our evaluation process. However, only one Practice Group is tracking its associates' achievement of the benchmarks. Without clear articulation of how benchmarks are to be used, their benefit is limited (although, in my opinion, it is still

[2]Our questionnaire also included the personnel category "Junior associates," anticipating that some firms' models might not yet extend above the junior level. But all the respondents who checked that category also checked the "All associates" category (quite correctly following our instructions to check all applicable answers).

worth the effort to prepare and publish them).

Strive for visible management support for

benchmark use. Be clear about how Practice Groups and associates are to use them.

Table 3. **Practice-Area Benchmarks: Status and Affected Personnel**			
Status	**All respondents (16)**	**Firms of >500 lawyers (5)**	**Firms of 100-500 lawyers (11)**
Already in place	Firmwide: 5 (31%)	Firmwide: 3 (60%)	Firmwide: 2 (18%)
	In some areas: 5 (31%)	In some areas: 1 (20%)	In some areas: 4 (36%)
How long in place:			
<1 year	2 (12.5%)	1 (20%)	1
1-2 years	0	0	0
3-4 years	4 (25%)	0	4
5+ years	4 (25%)	3 (60%)	1 (9%)
In development	1 (6%)	0	1 (9%)
Decided to develop	1 (6%)	0	1 (9%)
Under consideration	2 (12.5%)	0	2 (18%)
Not yet considering	0	0	0
Decided against developing	2 (12.5%)	1 (20%)	1 (9%)
Personnel affected or to be affected	**All firms with benchmarks in place or planned (12)**	**Firms of >500 lawyers (4)**	**Firms of 100-500 lawyers (8)**
All associates	12 (100%)	4 (100%)	8 (100%)
Staff attorneys	3 (25%)	1 (25%)	2 (25%)
Non-equity partners	0	0	0
Equity partners	0	0	0
Firm administrators	0	0	0
Firm leaders	0	0	0

3. Assessment Uses of Core Competencies and Benchmarks

The average respondent with core competencies and benchmarks in place is using both as a basis for evaluating associates' performance and is providing both to associates and mentors for their own use in assessing associates' progress. The firm is using competencies but not benchmarks as a basis for advancement, compensation, and partnership selection decisions as well. It is not using either competencies or benchmarks as a basis for interviewing employment candidates, evaluating training effectiveness, or selecting lawyers for leadership positions or for participation in leadership development programs.

A. Firm-Wide Core Competencies

As shown below in Table 4, 100% of respondents with core competencies in place are using them as a basis for associate performance appraisals (evaluations). The competency definitions can be directly translated into performance appraisal criteria, as one PD officer experienced:

> After 1 year of having competencies, we used the competency specific factors as the evaluation questions for each associate level. That way, associates can know how they are faring re: progress within and toward the next level.

Table 4. Assessment Uses of Firm-Wide Core Competencies (in rank order)			
Use	All firms with competencies (10)	Firms of >500 lawyers (3)	Firms of 100-500 lawyers (7)
Performance appraisals (evaluations)	10 (100%)	3 (100%)	7 (100%)
Self-assessment of progress, per-formance, &/or development needs	10 (100%)	3 (100%)	7 (100%)
Advancement determinations	8 (80%)	3 (100%)	5 (71%)
Compensation determinations	7 (70%)	3 (100%)	4 (57%)
Mentors' assessment of mentee progress & development needs	6 (60%)	3 (100%)	3 (43%)
Partnership selection	6 (60%)	2 (67%)	4 (57%)
Interviewers' assessment of employment candidates	4 (40%)	1 (33%)	3 (43%)
Evaluation of successful completion of training	3 (30%)	0	3 (43%)
Selection to leadership positions	3 (30%)	1 (33%)	2 (29%)
Admission to leadership development programs	2 (20%)	1 (33%)	1 (14%)

All respondents (100%) are also providing the competency definitions to associates so the latter can assess their own performance and progress, and most mentor programs (60%) are using them to guide associates' development as well.

A majority are using competencies as a basis for personnel decisions such as advancement, compensation, and partnership selection. In the levels system which is part of many firms' core competency models, the assessments for advancement and compensation may be linked:

> ... [B]ecause we are a Levels firm, all Advancement Determinations are also Compensation determinations, so use of competencies for advancement will affect comp[ensation].

Note in Table 4 above that the larger firms (>500 lawyers) in our survey sample are making more consistent use of competencies for advancement, compensation, and mentoring than are the mid-sized firms (100-500 lawyers). A minority of firms in both size categories are using competencies as a basis for employment interview assessments.[3]

B. Practice-Area Benchmarks

What strikes us about the benchmark data below in Table 5 is that our respondents' top assessment uses for benchmarks are developmentally oriented – that is, practice-area benchmarks are primarily being used by associates and their mentors to guide associates' developmental progress more than they are being used by the firms to guide personnel decisions.

Particularly noteworthy is the much reduced use of benchmarks as a basis for performance appraisal (by 67% of respondents vs. 100% for core competencies – see Table 4 above). That may stem from the fact that achieving an experience milestone depends on a particular type of work being available – work allocation has been a perennial challenge, and especially so in the past few years. It may also have to do with the fact that benchmarks differ from one practice area to another, whereas core competencies provide a common standard for evaluating associates' performance across the entire firm.

We were surprised that more firms are not using benchmarks for interviewing at least their lateral candidates to make sure they have the depth of experience needed and also to slot them in at the appropriate level.

---

[3]A 2009 NALP Foundation survey, whose sample size was undoubtedly larger and more statistically significant than ours, found that 51% of the responding firms used core competencies in "Recruiting." But that percentage may include informational/promotional use (e.g., publishing the competency model to law schools and employment candidates) as well as assessment use in competency-based interviews. *Survey of Law Firm Use of Core Competencies and Benchmarking in Associate Compensation and Advancement Structures.* July 2009: NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education. Available for download at www.NALPFoundation.org.

Table 5. Assessment Uses of Practice-Area Benchmarks (in rank order)			
Use	All firms with benchmarks (12)	Firms of >500 lawyers (4)	Firms of 100-500 lawyers (8)
Self-assessment of progress, performance, &/or development needs	10 (83%)	3 (75%)	7 (87%)
Mentors' assessment of mentee progress & development needs	9 (75%)	4 (100%)	5 (62%)
Performance appraisals (evaluations)	8 (67%)	2 (50%)	6 (75%)
Advancement determinations	5 (42%)	2 (50%)	3 (37%)
Compensation determinations	5 (42%)	2 (50%)	3 (37%)
Partnership selection	4 (33%)	2 (50%)	2 (25%)
Interviewers' assessment of employment candidates	3 (25%)	1 (25%)	2 (25%)
Evaluation of successful completion of training	3 (25%)	1 (25%)	2 (25%)
Selection to leadership positions	2 (17%)	1 (25%)	1 (12%)
Admission to leadership development programs	1 (8%)	1 (25%)	0

4. Summary and Conclusion

The average firm that responded to our survey:

- Has both a firm-wide core competency model and practice-area benchmarks, and both templates are applicable to all associates but not to other lawyers.
- Uses the core competencies as a basis for associate performance appraisal, advancement, and compensation and for partnership selection.
- Also provides the core competencies for use by associates and their mentors in assessing associates' progress, performance, and developmental needs.
- Uses the benchmarks primarily for developmental purposes, providing them

to associates and their mentors to assess and guide progress, but also uses them in associate performance appraisal.

Firm-wide core competency models are new to law firms: The first we know of was featured in a PDQ article in 2003.[4] That

___

[4] Peter Sloan, "From Lockstep to Levels." *Professional Development Quarterly,* August 2003. Sloan's book about his firm's competency model came out the year before (Peter B. Sloan, *From Classes to Competencies, Lockstep to Levels.* 2002: Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP) and was reviewed in our November 2002 issue.

newness is reflected in our survey results. Of the models now in place at the responding firms, 75% were implemented within the past 2 years.

Core competencies are also a growing trend. The majority of the firms who responded to our survey (62%) have them already in place, in development or revision, or planned.

Practice-area benchmarks, on the other hand, have been around a lot longer. (The author received a sample list of litigation practice milestones from ALI-ABA in 1989, when she joined its in-house training subsidiary AILTO.) That, too, is reflected in the greater age of our respondents' existing benchmark templates: 80% of them have been in place for 3 years or longer, and 40% of them for over 5 years.

Our respondents' comments reflect some stresses and growing pains around the new competency systems:

I wish I could say we were further along in developing defined core competencies and benchmarks.

*

Whatever a firm can do to align PD systems in advance of using Core Competencies to evaluat[e] associates SHOULD be done (e.g., develop and implement training, work assignments). Otherwise associates are suspect of the use and benefit of competencies.

Practice-area benchmarks appear to have become a stable feature of associate management and development in many firms. It remains to be seen whether the new core competency trend is here to stay and how competency models may be shaped by firms' experience with them over time.

To be reviewed in the May issue:

Terri Mottershead, consultant and former law firm PD/talent management officer, has edited and contributed to a comprehensive new resource published by West. *The Art and Science of Strategic Talent Management in Law Firms* covers the full range of issues in attorney management and development in chapters written by some of the foremost experts on their topics, including past *PDQ* authors Steve Armstrong, Heather Bock, Sari Fried-Fiori, and Sue Manch.

Creating Connections: Channels and Tactics for Internal Communications (Part 2 of 2)
Lisa S. Kirby[1]

> *The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*
> George Bernard Shaw

Part I of this article discussed the business case for supporting professional development goals with a comprehensive internal communications framework. To create the connections necessary to advance our goals, we need a common language and sense of common purpose. As firms have expanded, so have platforms for communication – we have moved from periodic paper memos to email, text messages, blogs, Facebook, and much more. And research shows that effective communication helps improve attorney engagement.

So you've established the business case and want to make progress on your internal communications goals. How can you take action? What are the primary communications channels and the key tactical considerations for each? The matrix below outlines the key methods, their benefits and drawbacks, and potential applications. Below that, you'll find communications plans based on the chart for three real-life professional development challenges.

Quote of the Quarter:

"A fully articulated law firm competency model includes core competencies based on the skills and traits that are shared by a firm's most successful lawyers, as well as practice-specific benchmarks that describe the specific experiences associates should accumulate as they progress in the firm."

– Susan Manch, in *The Art and Science of Talent Management in Law Firms* (Terri Mottershead, Ed., 2010, Thomson Reuters).

Communications Matrix

Communication Channel	Benefits	Drawbacks	Potential Application
In Person Meeting (small groups or 1-on-1)	Builds relationships More personal approach Real time Facilitates conversations Opportunities to collect feedback and answer questions	Harder to reach large group Logistics challenges Requires good facilitator	Focus groups Trainings Obtaining buy-in on a new program
In Person Meeting (large group)	Casts a "wider net" Greater ability to control messages Gets attention Allows for facilitators from across the organization Less personal than a small-group meeting, but more personal than an email	Logistics challenges Less two-way dialogue Introverts may not participate	Significant firm or organizational updates Town hall meetings Trainings
Email (including calendar items)	Real-time information Low or no cost Efficient Greater ability to control messages Audience can refer back to the message	Not a two-way dialogue Impersonal Can be "lost in the shuffle" Format must be considered Can be forwarded to anyone	General announcements Recognition Training tips and suggestions
Video	Visually engaging "Humanizes" content Works for geographically diverse audiences	Technology needs Cost Requires significant prep time	Firm announcements (internal and external) Recruiting Recognition
New Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other online networking sites)	Real time Internal and external applications Connects well with Gen X and Y	Goes "viral" Difficult to control the message May need to "police"	Recruiting Recognition Event promotion
Intranet and Online Communications	Real-time information Casts wide net Visually engaging Links to internal and external resources Creates community	Resources to manage Needs constant refreshing Technology	Administrative announcements People profiles Calendar of events PR wins and successes

Developing a Communications Plan

Let's say you have three goals for your professional development program this year—introducing a new writing coaching program for selected senior associates, reprising an off-site leadership skills training program, and launching a legal skills training series for junior associates. Taking some of the communications channels outlined above, let's see how they fit into a communications plan for these programs, starting well before launch and continuing after the program concludes.

A few preliminary tactical considerations: First, a minor-seeming point, but worthy of mention, is that the time and day of your communications really matter. Of course you wouldn't send a launch announcement for a major program at 4:00 pm the day before Thanksgiving. But really consider the ideal dates and times for your firm—if your offices are scattered around the country, take that into account. Your Tuesday 10:30 a.m. announcement with fancy animation will reach an awake and ready crowd on the East Coast but will mainly be viewed by mobile device by half-awake West Coasters.

Also, you need to clarify your own goals for each program before you can design a communications plan. If the goal in a training (perhaps the writing training below) is to respond to feedback from partners, your plan would differ from one where a goal is to obtain partner buy-in (might be necessary for a new leadership skills training).

And of course, communications cultures vary from firm to firm. The general ideas below may not cover every possibility. Some firms routinely exhibit posters in the cafeteria or library. Technologically advanced firms may now be tweeting updates to their associates on Twitter. So, of course, use the suggestions below as ideas to build upon and modify as appropriate for your firm.

Writing Coaching for Senior Associates:

Introducing this program will require diplomacy and careful thought. Senior associates who have been nominated for writing coaching may react defensively at being targeted for a perceived "remedial" program or may worry that their jobs are at risk. Though some will have a positive attitude, others may participate resentfully or anxiously, detracting from the program's success. So simply sending a calendar item to targeted associates with the subject line "Writing Coaching Meeting" would probably not be the best approach.

For this example, let's assume you already have partner buy-in—maybe they suggested the program or wholeheartedly support the concept after spending their weekends correcting basic errors in senior associates' drafts. So your goal is to improve associates' writing, and eventual client service, by successfully rolling out the program, generating associate buy-in and excitement, and producing some positive buzz that will reflect well on your efforts. (Although the program is mandatory for the selected associates, buy-in is, of course, still important, particularly in times of uncertainty and fragile morale.)

In an ideal communications plan, you would lay the groundwork early, through in-person and small-group meetings, for a more personal feel and to facilitate conversation. For example, if you regularly hold group writing programs for senior associates, a partner could introduce the session and mention that some associates will have the opportunity to participate in individualized writing coaching later in the year. If possible, you could plan for the writing coaching message to be shared during an associate's performance review or a regular mentor check-in, possibly scripting talking points to ensure it is presented as a positive opportunity rather than as a punishment (or worse, some silly requirement dreamed up over in professional

development). This will allow for a more in-depth two-way conversation and even build some enthusiasm (or at least acceptance).

Once the nominees have been notified (and have recovered from any harm to their egos), an email announcement from a key partner might be a good next step. A department chair or a similar leader could send an official announcement to all senior associates offering the opportunity. This will allow a consistent message to tie up any loose ends left by earlier conversations and show support from the top.

Finally, the participants could receive a follow-up telephone call from the coach to start the relationship on a personal level, followed by a calendar appointment. After the coaching sessions, participants could complete an evaluation form, or participate in a meeting with professional development staff to share reactions and suggestions, continuing the open dialogue and collaborative tone you've set throughout. You may want to post resources or scheduling information on an intranet site as an additional follow-up.

- Initial small-group meetings/introducing in performance reviews with prepared talking points to allow for dialogue/finely-tuned messaging

- Email announcement from leader for consistency/clarity of message with details to serve as reference

- Phone call to introduce/schedule followed by calendar item

- Follow-up meeting to share reactions/evaluation form

- Resources on intranet site

Associate Leadership Skills Training Program (repeat from a previous year):

You've run an off-site professional skills training program once before and want to renew partner buy-in and associate excitement. It's a significant time investment and requires travel for some participants. The program received generally high marks the previous year. Your basic goals for the program are to help associates learn critical management and professional skills that are not taught in law school or emphasized in most legal skills training. The program also allows participants to connect with peers across offices and departments.

Since this program occurs on specific dates and may require travel, you may want to start with a save the date email from a partner sponsoring the program. Because this is a special and unique program, you may want to develop a brand, which could be as simple as a specific font or color that is used throughout all communications. A specific brand can demonstrate the importance of the program to the firm and also help distinguish your communications.

The technically savvy and ambitious might consider circulating a video montage of presentations from the previous program, overlaid with positive comments from the evaluation. Whatever the format, the save the date should also highlight the previous success of the program—for example, by pulling out quotes from evaluations. An email from a partner leader to the partners should remind them of the training's goals and previous success as well as flag that the associates will be off-line for the duration of the program.

Building associate excitement might be accomplished by an in-person meeting, featuring the program faculty and past participants who can share their positive experiences. Though time-intensive, the additional effort to connect live, in person, will help ensure a prepared, positive

participant group—key when you're making such a large investment. To help attendance, have a key partner send the meeting announcement as well as a reminder emphasizing the importance of attending. (Reminders from past participants with personal stories of how the program impacted them might also be helpful.)

Preparing a faculty and participant facebook directory in advance can help build community before the program begins and establish faculty credentials in the minds of skeptical lawyers. If you include answers to survey questions in the facebook ("What is a surprising fact about you?), the responses will help facilitate the internal networking goal of the program.

Of course, emails are the best bet for logistics/agenda/homework communications so participants can refer back to them as needed. Depending on the complexity of the travel, and length of the agenda, you may also want to share a hard-copy packet with participants (branded, if possible). To continue the momentum, follow-up meetings or email communications with program alumni could continue. Resources, announcements, and other information could be posted on the intranet. You may want to write an article (including photos, if possible) about the program to be posted on your intranet or in a firm newsletter.

Junior Associate Legal Skills Training Series:

You'll be launching a series within a few months after the new associate orientation, so have a partner speaking at the orientation tell the associates to look out for information about the program. This "pre-wiring" raises visibility and increases quick recognition of future communications.

As you develop the program, you may want to circulate a quick survey (using email or a tool like Survey Monkey) to learn topics the participants would like addressed and their experience with the area (probably very little, but it still may be helpful to understand where the participants are coming from). This will also help increase their buy-in and familiarity with the program. (When you send a calendar appointment or introduce the training, you can say you emphasized certain topics based on their feedback.)

Of course, you'll probably send calendar items for the trainings. Folded name cards are an extra effort but, for a larger participant group, can help faculty and participants connect and may facilitate more participation. You can follow up with an emailed online evaluation and post resources and a recording of the program on the intranet.

- Branding throughout

- Email save-the-date to participants (consider video)

- Email partner reminder from partner leader

- In-person meeting to build excitement, answer questions, help participants prepare

- Facebook (hard-copy directory) to help build community/establish faculty credentials

- Emails for logistics info

- Hard-copy packet if significant volume

- Follow-up in person, emails, and via resource page on intranet

---

- Heads up during orientation

- Survey of interest/experience level

- Email announcement

- Calendar appointments

- Name cards

- Online evaluation

- Materials available on intranet

Conclusion

In professional development we cannot achieve our goals without a clear understanding of our mission and purpose or without visibility within the firm for the value we add. Successful, well-thought-out communications plans are essential to these goals. The benefit of thinking through even a very simple communications plan is that it allows you the luxury of considering audience, tone, setting, and other factors well in advance and preparing appropriately. And the proactivity of planning your communications will also help you manage your own time. Where you might otherwise be answering the same question multiple times or considering the next step of the program, you can use your time to advance your mission more meaningfully (and effectively).

Many in professional development wish that the attorneys we serve communicated more effectively with one another. One way to help achieve this is to take the opportunity in our roles to show leadership and to model thoughtful, careful, and effective communications within our organizations. We hope these ideas will inspire you to become communications leaders.

Lisa S. Kirby is a Manager of Professional Development & Training at Goodwin Procter LLP, where she develops and manages a wide variety of legal and professional skills training programs and key professional development and diversity initiatives. Before joining Goodwin Procter in 2006, Lisa practiced law at two large law firms. She received her JD, with high honors, from George Washington University Law School and her AB, magna cum laude, from Colgate University. She can be reached at lkirby@goodwinprocter.com.

Dare to Measure: Can Objective Assessments Predict and Change Performance?

PDQ Interview with Ross Guberman
January 14, 2011

Editors' Note: As a rule, law firms don't test their lawyers on core skills. The one exception we know of is the legal writing assessment developed by trainer/coach Ross Guberman of Legal Writing Pro. Several law firms are using it to give feedback to their associates and/or summer associates and at least one law school has offered it to its entering first-year students. They all aim to help these lawyers strengthen their writing skills. We invited Ross to tell us more about his assessment and let PDQ's readers listen in.

What persuaded you to develop a multiple-choice writing assessment in the first place?

Well, the most pressing reason was that I needed a peer-reviewed work product to get my certification from ASTD![2] But I had several other key goals as well.

In legal circles, great writing is often treated as something subjective and hard to pin down—a bit like what Justice Potter Stewart said about pornography: "I know it when I see it."

I have always been skeptical of the idea that great legal skills are in the eye of the beholder, but I wanted to test out my hunch. So one of my goals in designing the assessment was to learn whether there's some sort of "X factor" in writing that distinguishes strong performers from weaker performers, regardless of idiosyncratic style preferences.

Another goal was to give lawyers the objective feedback on their writing that many of them crave. I wanted to make sure that the lawyers got not just an overall "score" but also a sense of their writing strengths and weaknesses. In part, I thought a well-designed assessment could inspire attorneys to chart a course of action that would help them make real progress.

With the recent competency craze, I was also curious to see how much overlap I'd find between attorneys at different class levels. Here's a provocative question: How many associates have better technical writing skills than the average partner? From another perspective, are firms missing opportunities to identify superstars early on, to nurture them with especially challenging writing assignments, and to exploit their superior skills to the firm's benefit?

Finally, although recruiting and PD professionals (my client base) know all too well that writing is a frequent stumbling block, I wanted to figure out exactly why it is that some associates have so much more trouble with this core competency than others. Put another way, I thought it would be great to develop an assessment that required no filtering—instead of measuring associates' writing by asking partners what they think, why not figure out a way to measure the skill directly?

---

[2] Ross is a Certified Professional in Learning and Performance™ from the American Society for Training and Development. See a summary description of the certification program in our "Professional Developments" column on p. 34.

Have any of the results surprised you?

As the test has evolved and as so many people have taken various versions of it, one thing I've learned is that the way people treat the assessment itself reflects something about their work habits—above and beyond their writing skills. At one firm, for example, after an entire summer associate class took the assessment, I was happy to learn that the summer associates' rank order on the assessment predicted how well they did on their research and writing projects. But what really surprised me was that, putting aside the scores themselves, the summer associates who waited until the last possible minute to take the assessment just so happened to be the same summer associates who had trouble all summer meeting deadlines and being organized.

At another firm, I learned that the associates who used very little of the allotted time on the assessments were often the very same associates who rushed through their work and did not show great attention to detail.

Here's one hypothesis: The test is frankly very hard and probably tedious to some of the test takers even though the content of the questions is fairly interesting. Part of being a good lawyer, of course, is having sustained attention while focusing intensely on small details. Though I never expected to measure anything other than writing, people who do well on the test appear to have at least some of what it takes to succeed overall.

Does that mean the test is working—that it's predicting how these attorneys or summer associates would actually perform on the job?

After a couple of years of number-crunching, I now have enough data to say yes, the assessment does predict how people perform in "real life." Of course, a test can do only so much: even when you look just at legal writing, superior performance means more than just great technical writing skills. On the other hand, I have yet to see a single example of someone scoring low on the assessment and yet "in real life" writing cleanly, tightly, and effectively. In other words, the skills that the assessment measures are necessary, but perhaps not sufficient, if the attorney wants to be a standout writer.

I have even tried to create a "warning zone" when it comes to the overall score. If someone takes the assessment and scores below 37%, for example, in my experience they have about a 90% chance of encountering problems at a major law firm, regardless of what law school they went to or what other paper credentials they might have.

I have also tried to compare the performance of different groups to better understand why some associates run into trouble while others prevail. For example, I've noticed that associates sent to me for writing coaching consistently answer certain questions incorrectly far more often than do associates in general. Another interesting finding: Summer associates at elite firms do much better on some questions than do law students as a whole—but no better on other questions.

Some people find it hard to believe that a multiple-choice writing test that takes less than an hour can predict performance, especially since attorneys don't choose between four predefined choices when writing at work. But if you think about it, this link really shouldn't really surprise anyone. After all, in general a law student's LSAT score, which measures such things as whether you can assign people to days of the week based on certain rules, predicts law-school performance better than the student's four-year undergraduate record does.

It's rare for law firms to do any sort of lawyer testing. How are firms and others in the profession reacting to this new test, especially given the recent focus on competency models?

I have often thought about how what I do fits into the recent embrace of competency models. At conferences and in my interactions with PD professionals, I've noticed a lot of enthusiasm for figuring out what it takes to be a successful attorney, less enthusiasm for measuring those skills, and even less enthusiasm for looking an attorney in the eye and saying, "Unfortunately your skills are not where they need to be." So resistance to the idea of an objective skills test with right-and-wrong answers is really, to my mind, a symptom of a broader issue: We can have all the competency models we want and hold summit after summit discussing what it takes to succeed; but, at the end of the day, none of it's going to work unless people are willing to admit that some attorneys have below-par skills—and then figure out how to help them narrow the gap.

I fervently believe that the skills tested on this assessment can be improved with enough dedication. But the longer the skills gap persists, the harder it is to fix. Many talented associates are sent to me for coaching late in their careers—after years of getting extremely vague feedback like "your writing is OK but needs improvement." As painful as a low score on this assessment can be, that pain pales in comparison to having your career derailed over something that you could have fixed.

What exactly does the test measure?

The questions test a broad range of writing skills: syntax, parallelism, word choice, elegance of expression, transitions, and grammar, just to name a few. The average attorney gets 50 percent of the questions right, and the results follow the classic bell curve: Most attorneys are good at some of these things and less good at others, and thus get an "average" overall score. Relatively fewer attorneys get consistently high scores on all the subtests—or consistently low scores.

How do test takers react if they get a lower score than they expected?

When people get their results, their first question is not "How can I improve my writing?" but "Can I see the questions and answers?" Although I completely understand their curiosity, that question misses the point. The point is not to do well on this assessment for its own sake—but to use the results to chart a course of action. After all, whatever strengths or weaknesses are exposed on this assessment reflect years—if not decades—of writing experience by the test takers and are not going to change in either direction overnight.

Of the low scorers, some attorneys are defensive, but many others are in some ways relieved to have a sense of what exactly they need to do to improve.

How do you respond to someone who disputes the "right" answer to a question?

The answers I've chosen reflect much more than just my own views on writing. In fact, I have long ago thrown out all questions that didn't "work" as a statistical matter. In other words, unless people who do well on the assessment overall consistently choose the "right" answer to a particular question far more often than do the people who score poorly overall, I don't include that question no matter how sure I am that it measures something important about attorneys' writing skills.

How did you create the questions and how many are there?

As I developed the questions, I paid close attention to the kinds of subtle errors and glitches I saw in writing samples from

extremely talented lawyers who nevertheless had writing problems. I created questions that tested whether attorneys would avoid these subtle errors.

From a completely different perspective, I also took sentences written by some of the greatest legal writers alive and altered them slightly—three more times, to be exact—to see if lawyers could pick from the four alternatives the one written by the renowned writer. One of the things I've found is that attorneys said to have unusually good flow or punch in their writing consistently choose the right version, whereas less-adept attorneys choose versions that may convey the same meaning but do so less effectively.

I've played around with about 300 potential questions. From that initial pool, I have whittled the test down to the 75 best ones. For every one of those questions, I can say with confidence that one group answers that question much better than another: Partners get all these questions right more often than associates, associates identified as superstars get them right more often than other associates, or summer associates at elite firms get them right more often than do law students on the whole. In statistical terms, the assessment is internally reliable—people who do better on one section tend to do better on the others—and also valid for its intended purpose because it predicts real-world performance.

I can vary the length and the difficulty of the assessment by choosing different questions. But there's a core group of about 30 questions that appear on every version.

Any last insights?

In the end, I'd like people to see objective assessments like this one as a positive force for change—as a way to help attorneys reach their potential and realize that much of their fate remains within their control. They're also a way to make the evaluation process fairer and less subject to individual whims.

As the President of Legal Writing Pro, **Ross Guberman**

has conducted more than 1,000 programs for many of the nation's top law firms, agencies, and bar associations. He holds degrees from Yale, the Sorbonne, and The University of Chicago Law School and has earned an advanced certificate in adult learning and performance. A former professional musician, Ross is also an award-winning journalist and a media commentator. In January, his Point Made: How to Write Like the Nation's Top Advocates *was published by Oxford University Press. He can be reached at ross@legalwritingpro.com.*

The George Washington University
Master's Degree in Law Firm Management:
A Unique Curriculum with Scheduling and Methodology
To Meet the Needs of Busy Law Firm Managers and Leaders
Stephen R. Chitwood

Editors' Note: *We have listed this Master's Program in our "Professional Developments" column since the program's inception (see listing on p. 35). After hearing a glowing review of it from a fellow attendee at the PD Institute in December, we invited Steve Chitwood to tell us and you more about it. We think the program is unique as a career development opportunity for PD officers, as a leadership development opportunity for law firms, and as a model of experiential learning methods for working professionals that can inform the design of our own in-house programs. We especially appreciate Professor Chitwood's openness in explaining the program's instructional methodology.*

Introduction

The George Washington University in partnership with Hildebrandt Baker Robbins, an internationally-known legal consulting firm, has designed a unique Master's degree curriculum and certificate program focused solely on the management of private law firms. The program's curriculum is grounded in two assumptions:

> First, firm managers can add their greatest value only when they understand the strategic direction of their firms, the analytical process by which that strategic direction was developed, and the partner dynamics surrounding the creation and implementation of that strategic direction.

> Second, the technical and functional expertise possessed by firm managers has become increasingly critical to the success and profitability of law firms. To insure their perspectives and insights gain the attention deserved from partners and others within the firm, these managers must acquire and exercise exceptional leadership skills.

These two assumptions gave rise to the two major segments of the program: Law Firm Strategic Management and Law Firm Leadership.

The second feature making this program unique is the qualifications of the teaching faculty. The program itself was designed by two former managing partners who now serve as law firm strategic consultants and a GW faculty member with years of experience in the field of legal management. The faculty all possess extensive practical as well as academic backgrounds in their areas of expertise. The faculty includes current Hildebrandt law firm consultants with expertise in strategic thinking and planning and law firm finance and economics; other law firm professionals specializing in legal technology/knowledge management and process improvement; and GW professors specializing in leadership, change management, and building and sustaining high performing teams.

Unique Curriculum: Unique Faculty

LAW FIRM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

A 9-Day Residency: June on a Saturday through Sunday

The first twelve credits of the program encompass the topic of law firm strategic

management. The program begins in June with a 9-day residency in Alexandria, Virginia, followed by a three-credit distance-learning course, and then a final three-credit 4-day residency. Prior to the 9-day residency, students undertake an extensive set of readings. These readings provide the necessary background in strategic thinking and planning, executive leadership, and law firm finance and economics required to understand and to participate fully in residency discussions, in-class case studies, lectures, and other assignments.

A specially-written case study describing a general-practice, 400-attorney law firm in Chicago serves as the central focus of the students' attention during the 9-day residency, the follow-on distance learning, and final 4-day residency. The simulated firm case study was developed by Carl Leonard, a former partner and Chairman of Morrison & Foerster and founder of the Hildebrandt Institute. Drawing upon his extensive firm management experience and over 20 years consulting with firms throughout the world, Carl created the simulated firm of Dearborn and Clark (D&C). The case study is over 40 pages long and provides extensive and detailed data on the firm's present and past financial situation, its organization and management structure, a past firm strategic plan, a past consultant's report, and a detailed sketch of the talents and foibles of many of the firm's partners and administrative staff.

During the 9-day residency, faculty drawn primarily from Hildebrandt Baker Robbins consultants walk students through the intricacies of law firm strategic thinking and planning, the current status of the increasingly competitive and global legal industry, the finance and economics of law firms, firm organization structures and compensation systems, client development and marketing, market research, and the dynamics of partner relations and relationships.

After these topics are presented, students assume the role of the firm's managing partners and work in teams during and after class to apply what they have learned to issues arising from the D&C case. As managing partners, students are required to analyze and make recommendations regarding such things as D&C's culture, the firm's prior strategic plan, compensation decisions for the firm's individual partners, the behavior of problem partners, restructuring practice groups, and confronting the firm's overdependence on a single client.

In addition to individual faculty presenters, Stephen Chitwood and Carl Leonard, the respective University and Hildebrandt program co-directors, are present during each day of the 9-day residency and the remaining 21 residency days of the program. They provide continuity for the program among faculty presenters, teach as faculty themselves, and serve as an ongoing resource for students to discuss legal industry, firm, and future career interests and concerns. The residency concludes with a comprehensive take-home final examination.

On the first day of the program, students are assigned to teams of six or fewer and work together throughout the strategic law firm segment. Teams are designed with a mix of students from different technical and functional backgrounds, different sizes of law firms, and different regions of the country. The different characteristics of team members allow them to learn from each other as well as from the course itself.

Distance Learning: June though October

With the conclusion of the 9-day residency, students begin the four-month, three-credit distance-learning course. Operating from the 10,000-foot strategic view of the firm, students working in their teams are asked to play the role of consultants to the simulated

firm of Dearborn and Clark and to accomplish four major tasks: (1) conduct a profitability analysis of a D&C practice group and one of its offices; (2) undertake a market analysis for the firm's Chicago banking practice; (3) based upon the results of the preceding tasks and information contained within the case study, develop a strategic plan for D&C; and (4) analyze and recommend whether D&C should respond positively to an unsolicited merger proposal.

Students complete the foregoing tasks by working as virtual teams. The team members coordinate their efforts through conference calls, emails, wikis, and other electronic means. To facilitate the success of the teams, one day of the 9-day residency is devoted to training students in the operations of effective virtual teams. As teams work through and complete these tasks, team members have ready access to faculty for discussion and consultation.

The firm profitability analyses and market analysis are graded and returned to students during the distance learning period. The teams' strategic plans and their merger analyses and recommendations are completed and brought with them to the final November 4-day residency.

A 4-Day Residency: November on a Friday through Monday

The final 4-day residency finds each student team making an oral presentation of its strategic plans for D&C and its recommendations regarding the unsolicited merger proposal. The presentations are made to the entire class including Professors Chitwood and Leonard. The presentations are interspersed with questions and critique from the audience.

Following the presentations of the teams' strategic plans and merger recommendations, the students are informed of a major crisis that has arisen in the firm.

The nature of this crisis is so severe that it may invalidate their proposed strategic plans for D&C. With this new information, students resume work in their teams to review their proposed strategic plans and make adjustments where necessary. On the following day, the teams present and defend before the class their revised strategic plans. The 4-day residency concludes with a panel discussion addressing the current and future nature and direction of law firms and the legal industry. Panel members in the past have included current firm managing partners, executive directors, and other legal industry notables.

The Individual Reflective Learning Journal

An integral part of this segment of the program is a requirement that each student complete an Independent Reflective Learning Journal. In their journals, students are instructed to select and to reflect upon an "object of attention" employing instrumental, interpretive, or critical reasoning. During the 9-day residency, objects upon which students choose to reflect may be a new learning, a person, an experience, a thought, an emotion, a vague physical sensation, or even another reflection. Throughout the distance-learning course, students' objects of attention are confined to their own personal and interpersonal behaviors and the dynamics of their virtual teams. The journal is designed to introduce students to these three types of reasoning, to require them to engage in self-reflection, and to take their learning from the program to a deeper and more personal level.

LAW FIRM LEADERSHIP

A 9-day Residency: February on a Saturday through Sunday

To have a positive impact in the modern law firm and today's economic climate, firm

managers must demonstrate authentic leadership and effective change navigation and team management skills. To this end, the second twelve credits of the program focus on Law Firm Leadership.

The program again begins with a 9-day residency in Alexandria, Virginia, followed by a three-credit distance-learning course, and a final three-credit 4-day residency. As before, prior to the 9-day residency, students undertake an extensive set of readings. These readings provide the necessary background in the general topic of leadership, leadership development, and leadership skills and competencies required to understand and to participate fully in residency discussions, in-class case studies, lectures, and other assignments.

Specifically, this segment has two interrelated objectives. The first objective involves students creating a personal leadership vision and reflecting upon and assessing their leadership strengths and developmental opportunities. To accomplish this objective, students take a number of personal self-tests providing insights into their own values, attitudes, personalities, conflict management styles, leadership styles, preferences for team roles, and personal motivations to lead and to manage. The implications of these tests for students are described by the faculty and explored individually by the students to the extent they wish to do so. From these tests and their personal reflections, students obtain a clearer perception of their own leadership strengths and weaknesses and formulate their personal leadership vision statements.

The second objective is to assist students in developing specific leadership skills in motivation, delegation, exercising power, constructive criticism, communication, conflict management, managing change, and team building. Course readings, lectures, and class discussions set forth theories, principles, and practices describing what we currently understand to be accurate and practical knowledge in these areas. The information learned from the earlier self-tests provides students with useful insights into which of these leadership skills they may most easily master and which ones will require more effort. Through the use of case studies and role plays, students have the opportunity to experiment with these skills and assess more precisely their current developmental levels.

The preceding two objectives combine to assist students in developing a personal and authentic leadership presence. Such a presence projects a character of integrity, competence, and caring. But this presence can generate action from others only through effective communication. To enhance students' communication skills, an entire session is devoted to Dramatic Art Techniques and Leadership Communication. Drawing upon their personal experiences and dramatic art techniques, students develop and deliver to the class a personal story conveying a precise and specific leadership message. During this process students learn that stories, when carefully and thoughtfully crafted, can grab attention, get their points across, and remain longer in the memory of their audiences than any PowerPoint presentations.

The final day of the residency summarizes earlier leadership learnings by discussing two movies viewed earlier by the students—Norma Rae and Gandhi. Selected segments of each movie are shown to the class, followed by class analysis and discussion. Each selected segment has been chosen by the faculty to represent a major leadership topic or skill addressed earlier in the residency. Through this process students conclude this leadership course by seeing, analyzing, and discussing the leadership skills of women and men in action. The residency concludes with a comprehensive take-home final examination.

Distance Learning: February through April

The distance-learning portion of the Leadership segment requires students to draw upon the readings, lectures, discussions, and self-reflections of the 9-day residency and apply their learning to three major projects. These projects are undertaken individually by the students with faculty consultations available throughout the period.

The first project requires students to create a detailed individual leadership development plan extending over a minimum of two years. In their plans, students identify and establish objectives for enhancing their leadership strengths and addressing their weaknesses. Next, they specify the different activities and means for accomplishing these objectives. To achieve these objectives, students in the past have identified specific books they will read; seminars and courses they will attend; mentors and executive coaches they will engage; memberships they will acquire in organizations such as Toastmasters, ALA, and ASTD; stretch assignments they will seek out; 360 evaluations they will have made; and colleague overseers who will keep them honest.

For the second project students select a biography or autobiography of a particular leader of their choice and undertake a leadership analysis of that individual. The leaders may be male or female and may be drawn from the realms of law, politics, business, military affairs, academia, the arts, social movements, religion, or other areas of interest. Students describe, analyze, and discuss how their chosen leader's leadership approach mirrors or diverges from the effective leadership characteristics, practices, principles, skills, etc. discussed during the 9-day residency. The analysis concludes with a discussion of new leadership learning the student has acquired through the study of this leader.

The third project focuses upon change leadership. For this project students identify a specific organization change initiative in which they personally are or have been involved. The change initiative may be ongoing or a past initiative; it may take place within the students' workplace organization or outside the workplace; and the students may be leading the change or be only involved or affected participants in the change. Drawing from prior course learning pertaining to change leadership and managing teams, students write a case study in which they describe, analyze, and critique the effectiveness of the leadership efforts involved in their chosen change initiative. This case study involves a description of where and how the change leader was effective and/or ineffective; how the change and team leadership literature might explain this success or failure; what the change leader might have done differently to be more effective; and what new insights into change and team leadership students have acquired from this exercise.

Students submit these three projects to the faculty over the course of the distance learning session and bring them to the final 4-day residency to share with fellow students.

A 4-Day Residency: May on a Friday through Monday

The final 4-day residency is divided into two parts. During the first two days of the residency, students present their change-initiative case studies to the class and engage in questions and answers pertaining to their cases. While reinforcing change-leadership concepts and practices studied earlier, this process also advances students' presentation, communication, and persuasion skills. Since the case studies span a large spectrum of change initiatives, organizational settings, and leadership approaches, students add significantly to their growing insights on change leadership.

In addition to the presentation of case studies, students also engage in peer reviews and critiques of their individual leadership development plans. Following instruction on how to critique their plans, students form triads and take turns describing their plans and receiving feedback and recommendations on the practicality, comprehensiveness, originality, and potential success of their plans. During this process, students frequently learn from one another new and additional activities for accomplishing their leadership objectives—as well as activities they may want to alter or delete from their plans.

The final two days of the residency focus on leadership in the firm through the use of process management/legal lean sigma. Corporate counsels' growing emphasis on law firm efficiency has required firm managers to find ways to increase the productivity of the legal services they provide. Firms' increasing use of process management/legal lean sigma represents a primary means for achieving this goal. The faculty presenting this material is drawn from practitioners who provide day-to-day consultation to law firms implementing these techniques. Instruction over these two days provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and to implement their own individual process-improvement project. A take-home final examination concludes this residency and the Law Firm Leadership segment of the program.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT IN LAW FIRMS

Distance Learning: May through December

This is a three-credit, distance-learning course that follows immediately upon completion of the Leadership 4-day residency. Working with the process improvement/legal lean sigma faculty, students research, document, and design a charter for an individual legal lean sigma project in their firms or organizations. Upon approval of the charter, students implement the activities contained in the project charters.

Prior to and during the implementation of their legal lean sigma projects, students become intimately familiar with the problems and challenges of introducing this change methodology into private law firms. In order to overcome these resistances to change, students must draw upon and put into practice many of the ideas, concepts, principles, and practices studied during the Law Firm Leadership segment. The course is completed once students submit the results of their implemented legal lean sigma projects. Upon successful completion of the course, students are also awarded a yellow belt in legal lean sigma.

LEGAL TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

A 4-Day Residency: March on a Friday through Monday

The Master's Program concludes with a 4-day residency in March, two months before the GW May graduation. The first day of the residency consists of student presentations and critiques of their legal lean sigma projects. Through these presentations students learn of the breadth and variety of process-improvement projects that have been and can be undertaken to enhance the efficiency of law firm legal and administrative operations. This also offers students yet another opportunity to enhance their presentation, communication, and persuasion leadership skills.

The final three days of the residency address the increasing influence and importance of legal technology (IT) and knowledge management (KM) for enhancing the efficiency and profitability of firms' legal and administrative practices. The course is

taught by a former law firm partner who over 18 years ago "saw the light" and changed his career from being a successful "rainmaker" to becoming one of the foremost practitioners of law firm legal technology.

From course lectures, demonstrations, exercises, and class discussions, students gain an understandable and entertaining overview and insight into state-of-the-art legal IT and KM practices, procedures, and technology. The problems, difficulties, and challenges in influencing attorneys to use these technologies are examined; and suggested strategies are provided for overcoming this resistance. Students learn the elements of a firm's IT organization, the role and goals of KM, the components of a successful KM organization, how to assess the alignment of a firm's IT/KM strategy with its overall business strategy, and the future direction and potential impact on the legal practice and business outcomes of private firms.

The course concludes with a take-home examination in which students apply course ideas, concepts, and practices for purposes of describing, assessing, and critiquing their own firms' and organizations' IT and KM structures and operations.

Who Enrolls in the Program and Why

By May 2011, the program will have graduated 32 students with their Master's Degree in Law Firm Management and 19 students who separately have been awarded the Certificate in Law Firm Management. An additional 12 students will receive their Master's Degree in 2012. Students have joined the Program from throughout the United States and Canada. Their positions range from partners to CFOs, executive directors, professional development officers, operations managers, IT/KM directors, office administrators, library/information services

directors, marketing and client development managers, senior paralegals, and practice group administrators. They are employed by global, national, regional, and local firms of large, medium, and small size. Students from companies servicing the legal industry, such as search firms and Thomson Reuters, have also attended the program.

Most incoming students indicate they have selected the program to advance their careers in the legal industry, and many have indeed done so. Apart from the students' achievements after graduation, one theme has been recurrent in their comments when leaving the program. Without exception, they remark upon the confidence they now possess when talking with partners, other firm managers, and clients about their firms' strategic direction, where their firms fit competitively within their legal sectors, and how their particular expertise is aligned with these strategies.

In the years to come, program faculty will continue to seek new and even better ways to assist students in achieving similar accomplishments and advancing still further their professional and leadership confidence.

Stephen Chitwood, Ph.D., J.D., Professor Emeritus, The George Washington University, is Program Director of the Master's Degree in Law Firm Management and a consultant to private firms and government law offices specializing in strategic management and leadership. He may be contacted at chitwood@gwu.edu.

*(**Editor's Note:** This column highlights best practices and new approaches to common challenges of in-house training managers. We invite your comments and your suggestions for future articles. You can reach us at (703) 719-7030 or maraeg@profdev.com.)*

Training Formats for Partners

I was lucky in my law firm career to work for a firm whose partners were interested in letting me arrange training for themselves as well as for the associates. That doesn't mean they appreciated all the approaches I took with them, but they were always willing to give my efforts a try.

What I learned from that experience is that for partners, as advanced learners, the format of a program was as important as its subject matter. The smaller and more interactive the group, and the more control over the content and course of the discussion I gave to the partners, the better they liked it and the more they got out of it.

Some formats that were especially successful:

- Private coaching sessions with outside consultants to work on personally important skills and/or current projects. These sessions addressed topics such as business development plans, CLE or client presentations, oral arguments, managing projects and project teams, editing and coaching subordinates' writing, and organizing their office space and work habits for greater efficiency and productivity. Some of these sessions were even wholly or partly billable. But the best aspect was that the partners could focus the entire session exclusively on what they personally needed to learn and accomplish, and waste no time on things they already knew. (I think another plus was that they hated asking dumb questions in front of their peers as much as or more than the associates did.)

- Very small group (2-4 participants), partners-only sessions on computer training in our computer lab. These sessions were a lot of fun, with jokes flying and participants mercilessly ribbing one another as they fumbled through operations that were second nature to younger lawyers. It helped a lot that our computer trainer was a warm, witty, and well-liked individual.

- Facilitated small-group discussions about topics on which the partners already possessed some expertise – case management and budgeting, for example. The partners pulled information out of each other on the topic while a knowledgeable facilitator kept things on track and made sure any missing pieces were filled in. I knew a session had gone well when I saw people meeting up afterward with calendars in hand, making lunch dates to continue the discussion.

In general, I found that the less partners knew about a topic, the more they preferred private consultations; the more they knew, the more they benefitted from swapping ideas and experiences with their peers in a small-group setting (maybe 8-10).

Apart from the benefit to individual partners, these types of sessions can produce cross-fertilization of ideas across practice group lines that might not otherwise occur. Add to that the collegiality and cohesion that good live group training always promotes, and the benefits to the firm can be significant.

– Gaye Mara

Professional Developments

Events

Upcoming PD-related conferences, seminars, and workshops:

Legal Profession:

❄ 2/3-5/11, Nashville, TN. *2011 Newer Professionals' Forum.* National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.

❄ 2/6-8/11, New Orleans, LA. *2011 CLEreg Mid-Year Meeting.* Continuing Legal Education Regulators Association, www.clereg.org.

❄ 4/27-30/11, Palm Springs, CA. *2011 Annual Education Conference.* National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.

❄ 7/30-8/2/11, Boston, MA. *47th Annual Meeting.* Association for Continuing Legal Education, www.aclea.org.

General Audience:

❄ 2/2-4/11, San Jose, CA. *ASTD TechKnowledge Conference & Exposition.* American Society for Training and Development, www.astd.org.

❄ 2/7-9/11, San Diego, CA. *Training 2011 Conference & Expo.* Training Magazine, www.TrainingConference.com.

❄ 2/8-10/11, Saratoga Springs, NY. *Learning Leadership Academy.* The Masie Center, www.masie.com.

❄ 3/23-25/11, Orlando, FL. *Learning Solutions Conference & Expo.* The Learning Guild, www.LearningSolutions11.com.

❄ 3/28-30/11, Saratoga Springs, NY. *Video for Learning LAB & Seminar.* The Masie Center, www.masie.com.

❄ 3/29-30/11, Las Vegas, NV. *Telling Ain't Training Conference.* American Society for Training and Development, www.tat.astd.org.

❄ 4/8-13/11, Orlando, FL. *The Performance Improvement Conference*: pre-conference workshops 4/8-9,

conference 4/10-13. International Society for Performance Improvement, www.ispi.org.

❄ 5/22-25/11, Orlando, FL. *ASTD 2011 International Conference & Exposition.* American Society for Training and Development, www.astd.org.

❄ 6/?/11, Boston, MA. *Telling Ain't Training Conference.* American Society for Training and Development, www.tat.astd.org.

Certificate and Degree Programs

American Management Association, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) Certification Program, www.amacourses.com (4 days. See the website for dates and locations.)

American Society for Training & Development, Certificate Programs, www.astd.org (see the website for online and/or on-site dates and locations for each topic.):

• Action Learning Certificate (2 days)
• Advanced Designing Learning Certificate (2 days)
• Analyzing Human Performance Certificate (3 days)
• Blended Learning Certificate (2 days)
• Career Planning and Talent Management Certificate (2 days)
• Coaching Certificate (2 days)
• Consulting Skills for Trainers Certificate (2 days)
• Creating Leadership Development Programs Certificate (2 days)
• Creating New Supervisor Training Programs Certificate (2 days)
• Designing Learning Certificate (3 days)
• Designing Online Learning Using Rapid Prototyping Certificate (2 days)
• Facilitating for Excellence Certificate (1 day)
• Facilitating Organizational Change Certificate (2 days)
• HPI (Human Performance Improvement) in the Workplace Certificate (3 days)
• Managing Organizational Knowledge Certificate (2 days)
• Managing Talent for Mission Success Certificate (2 days)
• Managing the Learning Function Certificate (3 days)

- Measuring and Evaluating Learning Certificate (3 days)
- Multimedia for Instructional Designers Certificate (2 days)
- Presentation Skills Certificate (2 days)
- Project Management for Trainers Certificate (2 days)
- Rapid Learning Techniques Certificate (2 days)
- ROI Skill Building Certificate (2 days)
- Selecting HPI Solutions Certificate (3 days)
- Test Design and Delivery Certificate (2 days)
- Training Certificate (3 days)
- Training Certificate Plus! (4 days)

Clark Certification Programs, www.clarktraining.com:
Online. Check the website for available dates for:

1. e-Learning Certificate:

- Needs Assessment for Performance Technologists: Tools and Techniques
- How to Plan, Design, and Evaluate e-Learning
- e-Learning and the Science of Instruction

2. Instructional Systems Design Certificate:

- Needs Assessment for Performance Technologists: Tools and Techniques
- How to Plan, Develop, and Evaluate Training
- Building Expertise: How to Apply Learning Psychology to Instructional Design

George Mason University Leadership Coaching for Organizational Performance Certificate Program, Fairfax, VA. A one-semester program consisting of 5 in-person course modules of 2-3 days each approximately once a month, supplemented by distance learning and independent work between modules. Spring 2011 schedule:

2/22-24 - Course Module I, Leadership Coaching Foundation
3/23-24 - Course Module II, Creating Awareness
4/20-21 - Course Module III, Coaching Skills
5/18-19 - Course Module IV, Coaching Skills in Action
6/13-15 - Course Module V, The Process and Business of Coaching

www.ocpe.gmu.edu/programs/org_dev/leadership_coaching.php.

Ithaca College Online Professional Certificate Programs,
Ithaca College, www.ithaca.edu/gps/professional_programs.
Two-week online sessions in:

- Performance Improvement Management
- Strategic Communication Management
- Sustainability Leadership

Training Live+Online Certificate Programs.
www.TrainingLiveAndOnline.com. Upcoming online courses in:

- E-Learning Design (5 sessions beginning 2/24)
- Leading Effective Live Online Events (4 sessions beginning 3/14)
- Training Manager: Managing the Training Function for Bottom Line Results (4 sessions beginning 3/31)
- Scenario-Based E-Learning (4 sessions beginning 4/7)
- Producing Great Podcasts (3 sessions beginning 5/3)
- Designing E-Learning with Captivate (3 sessions beginning 5/10)
- Instructional Design: Performance-Based and Results-Focused (4 sessions beginning 5/11)
- Training Coordinator Certificate: A Consulting Approach to Coordinating the Training Function (4 sessions beginning 10/4)
- Project Management for Learning Professionals: Reduce the Rework (4 sessions beginning 10/5)

American Society for Training & Development CPLP Certification: Certified Professional in Learning and Performance. This is a comprehensive program consisting of approximately 10 weeks of coursework, a knowledge-based examination, and submission of a qualifying work product. It addresses the nine areas of expertise identified in the ASTD Competency Model for workplace learning & performance professionals:

- Designing learning
- Delivering training
- Improving human performance
- Measuring and evaluating learning
- Facilitating organizational change
- Coaching
- Career planning and talent management
- Managing the learning function
- Managing organizational knowledge

www.astd.org/content/ASTDcertification/.

University of Pennsylvania Executive Education for Chief Learning Officers. Penn's Wharton School and Graduate School of Education have teamed to create the "Executive Program in Work-Based Learning Leadership." The program offers "blended learning approaches that include onsite classes, virtual sessions, individual and team project work, and application work" in five curriculum blocks:

1. Organizational/strategic leadership
2. Workplace learning and performance leadership
3. Business analysis
4. Evidence-based decision making and analysis
5. Use of technology to support and enhance workplace learning

Students in the program may obtain a certificate from Wharton for any single course block, or may use the curriculum to pursue a master's or doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Education.
executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu/clo.htm.

Villanova University Master of Science in Human Resource Development. A two-year online master's program, offering courses in

- Organizational change
- Human resource planning
- Compensation
- International human resources
- Organizational training
- Project management

Sww.VillanovaU.com/MHRD.

George Washington University/Hildebrandt Institute Master of Professional Studies and Graduate Certificate in Law Firm Management.

The Master's curriculum is a two-year, 30-credit, blended learning program consisting of two 12-credit segments (Law Firm Management and Law Firm Leadership), and a 6-credit Independent Research Project. Each 12-credit segment begins and ends with an on-campus residency period in Alexandria, VA, with 4 months of online distance learning in between. The 12-credit segment in Law Firm Management may stand alone as a Graduate Certificate.
nearyou.gwu.edu/sfm/index1.html.

News:

Women associates and their mentors, take note: A **study of mentoring** by the women's advocacy group Catalyst, reported in the January 5 issue of *Human Resource Executive*, found that male MBAs with mentors get better promotions and raises than their female counterparts, mainly because the men "hitch their stars to higher-ranked executives" than the women do. The researchers observed that people generally seek mentor/mentee relationships with those of the same gender, there are more males than females in the upper ranks of companies, and the more highly placed the executive, the more influential s/he is as a sponsor of the mentee's career advancement.

The current report, *Mentoring: Necessary but Insufficient for Advancement,* is Catalyst's third in a series of longitudinal studies of over 4,000 "high-potential MBA alumni … from 26 top business schools," of whom 26% are women. (Marlene Prost, "Mentoring Missteps.")

Offshoring = Unauthorized Practice? *The Connecticut Law Tribune* reports that state legislator Patricia Dillon (D-New Haven) has proposed a bill under which "'unlicensed' offshore workers who engage in the drafting, reviewing or analyzing of legal documents for clients in Connecticut could be charged with unauthorized practice of law." She sees the problem as "a quality issue … and also a jobs issue."

Legal experts quoted in the article doubt that anything can be done about the growing trends of outsourcing and offshoring of lower-level tasks to reduce costs, a practice one said was approved by the ABA in 2008. Another characterized the work being outsourced as paralegal work, saying it does not require a law license even in the U.S. (Christian Nolan, "Conn. Bill Would Regulate Offshoring Document Review." January 19, 2011)

Subscribe to PD QUARTERLY

TO: Professional Development Services, P.O. Box 150306, Alexandria, VA 22315
Phone: 703-719-7030   Fax: 703-814-8590   E-mail: maraeg@profdev.com

☐ **Please send us one year (4 issues) of PDQ for:**

Number of attorneys in organization	*Subscription fee*	
☐ Under 100*	$125 annually	
☐ 100 or more	$195 annually	$_____

* The lower rate applies to government and not-for-profit organizations regardless of size.

Name _____   Title _____

Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Country _____ Email Address _____

☐ **My check payable to Professional Development Services is enclosed.**

☐ **Charge my** ☐ Visa   ☐ MasterCard   ☐ American Express:

Card # ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐   Expiration Date ☐☐-☐☐
                                                          Month   Year

Name of Card Holder (please print): _____

Signature _____