



PD Quarterly

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PDQ Subscription Form

Fall 2011 Survey Report:

The PD Profession and Attorney Development in 2011

Ida Abbott and Gaye Mara

In August 2011, we distributed a survey to 135 Professional Development Directors and Chief Talent Officers (collectively, “Directors”) of 135 law firms in the United States, Canada, and the UK. The distribution list was compiled from our combined contact databases. It included firms of varying sizes, but most of the responses came from Directors in large firms.

In total, we received 60 responses, a 44% response rate. Identification of each respondent’s name and firm was optional, but 24 Directors did provide that information in their survey answers. Five of those Directors were from Canada; the others were based in the United States.

The topics covered by the survey included:

- Profiles, qualifications, and background of Directors;
- The nature and scope of Directors’ responsibilities;
- The size and structure of professional development departments, including budgets and compensation;
- Professional development committees; and
- Factors that impact associate career development, notably:
 - New job categories for lawyers,
 - Specialization choices,
 - Career coaching, and
 - Work assignment and tracking systems.

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The results provide a clear snapshot of many important aspects of professional development in law firms today. While not intended or designed as a scientific or in-depth study, the survey does present some interesting findings about law firm practices, the role and influence of professional development directors, and the status of trends that have spread – or at least received attention – in recent years.

We can also draw some trend lines based on 2002 and 2007 PDQ surveys of the profession (“PDQ surveys”).

Key findings include:

- Most professional development directors (69.4%) have law degrees and practiced law for a period of time. Compared to past survey results, however, the dominance of law graduates in the profession, particularly at the higher compensation levels, is declining; and the importance of PD-relevant qualifications is rising.
- The Director’s job is big and varied, typically with firm-wide responsibility for 17 or more PD programs, most for associates but some for partners as well, and with some level of involvement in another dozen.
- Almost all of those who answered (91%) said they learned the skills necessary for their job “on the job.”
- While Directors’ budgets have decreased somewhat since the recession, their compensation has continued to rise.
- Alternatives to traditional career tracks for lawyer are increasing. A substantial majority of firms now employ lawyers who are something other than associates, partners, or counsel. These new categories include career attorneys, permanent associates, and contract attorneys hired directly by the firm, not through a staffing agency.
- Relatively few law firms (18%) employ career coaches, and most of those coaches are part-time.
- Few law firms monitor associates’ work assignments and experience. 38.2% of firms have no formal work assignment system, and 41.8% do not track associates’ work experience. Many of the firms that do have assignment and/or tracking systems report inconsistent use of those systems.
- 48.1% of respondents have adopted a competency model, but only slightly more than a quarter of those firms (26.3%) have a system in place to ensure associates receive the work experience needed to develop the skills and behaviors described in the competencies.
- Half of respondents are members of their firm’s top management team, and more than a third who are not on the top team feel their expertise is

respected and they are consulted on relevant matters. Even in tough economic times, most Directors feel they have the full support of the firm for professional development efforts.

1. Profiles of the Responding Professional Development Directors and Their Firms

Almost all of the respondents are from large regional, national, and international law firms. Only 1 of the 60 Directors who

responded to the survey is in a firm of fewer than 100 lawyers. Half the Directors (30) are in firms of 101-500 lawyers, and 18 (30%) are from firms of 501-1000 lawyers. Three respondents (5%) come from firms of 1001-1500 lawyers and 8 (13.3%) from firms of more than 1500. Figure 1 displays the size distribution.

Not surprisingly, most of these firms have multiple offices. As shown in Figure 2, only 6 respondents' firms have one office, while the largest group of respondents comes from firms with more than 15 offices (20%).

Figure 1. Size of the 60 Responding Law Firms

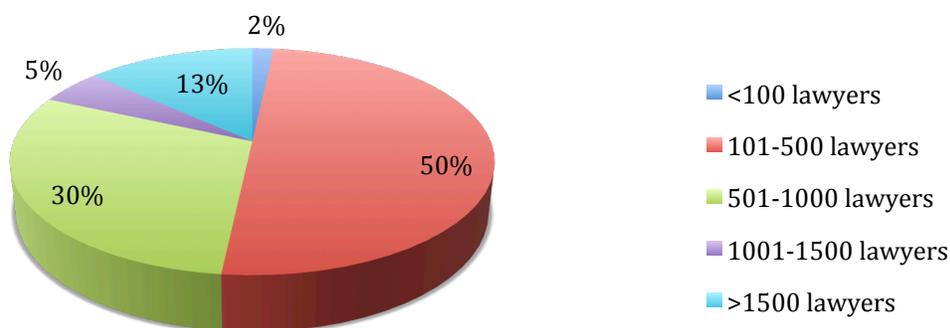
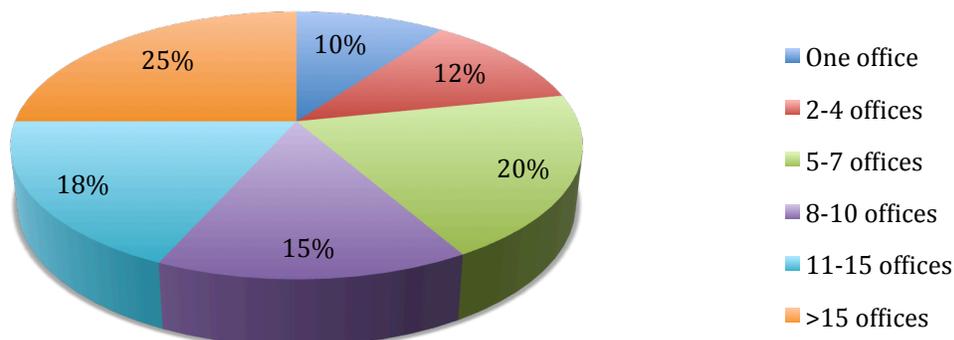
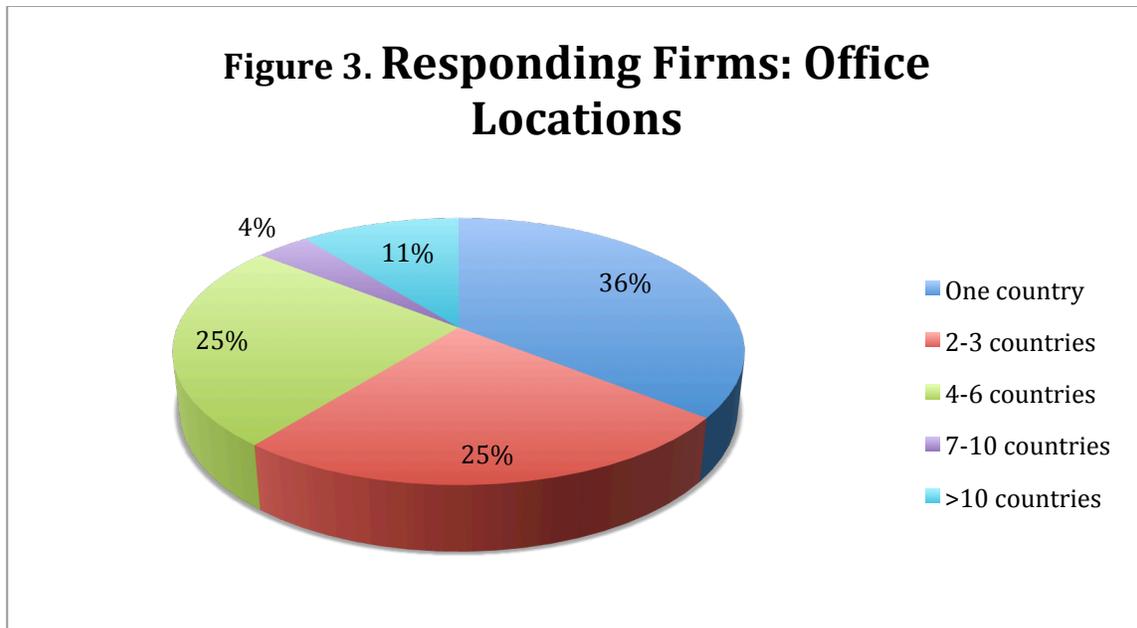


Figure 2. Responding Firms: Number of Offices



Moreover, almost two-thirds of these firms have international offices, as shown in Figure 3. While 20 of the firms (35.7%) have offices in only one country, 25% have offices

in 2-3 countries, another 25% in 4-6 countries, and 11% in more than 10 countries. Figure 3 displays the proportions.



Scope of Directors' Responsibilities

Fifty of the sixty respondents (83.3%) have firm-wide responsibilities. Four respondents have regional responsibilities (the regions they listed were North America, the United States, and British Columbia). Four respondents from international firms have responsibility only for domestic offices. One other firm-wide Director focuses primarily on the firm's New York office, and another is in charge of the office in Washington, DC with a counterpart responsible for the firm's New York office. Two respondents noted that while their role is firm wide, their assistance to the firm's offices in other countries is limited.

A large majority of the respondents from multi-office law firms (75.9%) are responsible for implementing or managing PD activities in all firm offices. Almost a quarter of those respondents (24.1%) have regional or local PD staff on-site in other offices to assist with implementation. A smaller number (13.8%)

have on-site office administrators who assist with professional development. One respondent explained that the firm has designated secretaries or receptionists to assist with logistical help for training programs. Still smaller numbers receive assistance from PD committee members (8.6%) or local PD partners (6.9%). One respondent commented that PD staff travel to other offices for major programs and involve local personnel for web-based and smaller events.

2. Organization of the PD Department

We asked several questions about the organizational setup of the responding firms' PD function:

- The title of the person answering the questionnaire
- To what position s/he reports

- Whether his/her job is full- or part-time and the size of his/her supporting staff
- Whether the firm has a committee for PD and, if so, who is on the committee, what is the committee’s mission, and what role on the committee is played by the PD Director

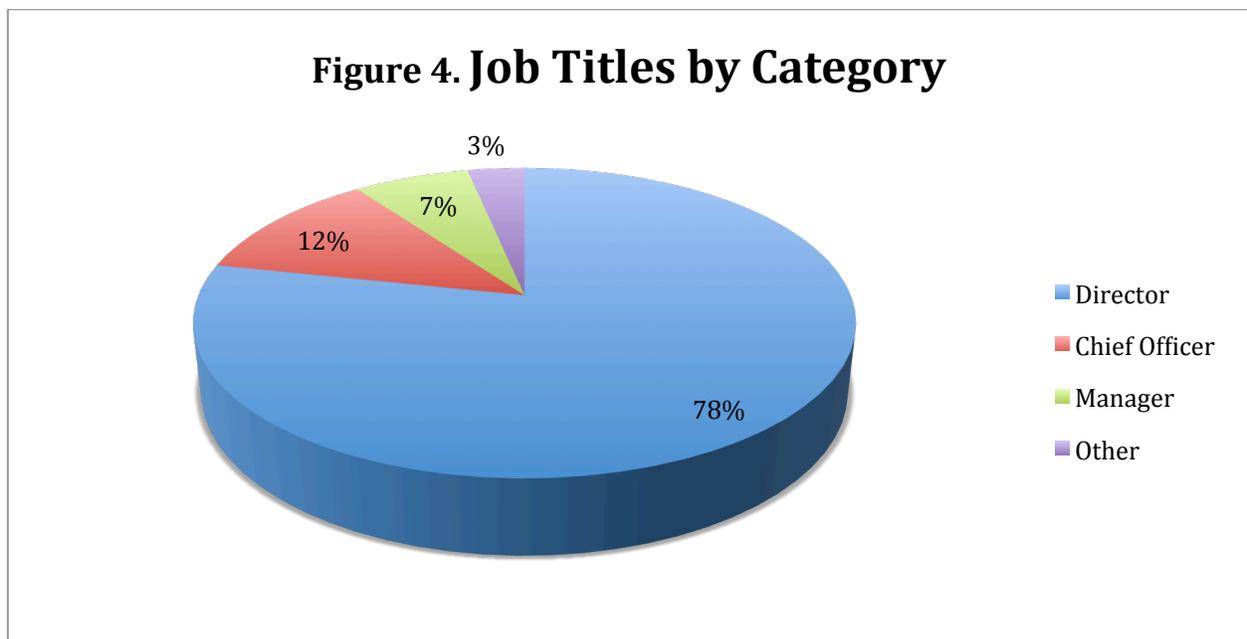
Job Titles

The overwhelming majority of our survey respondents (78.3%) are titled “Director,” with “Director of Professional Development” being the most common single title reported.

The overall breakdown of titles, in broad categories, is shown in Figure 4.

Titles that indicate a function other than, or in addition to, “Professional Development” include the following designations:

- Attorney Recruiting and Development
- Legal Recruitment and Benefits
- New Associate Professional Development
- Professional Resources
- Recruiting and Professional Personnel
- Staff, Associate, and Partner Development
- Talent Management
- Training and Development



Reporting Relationships

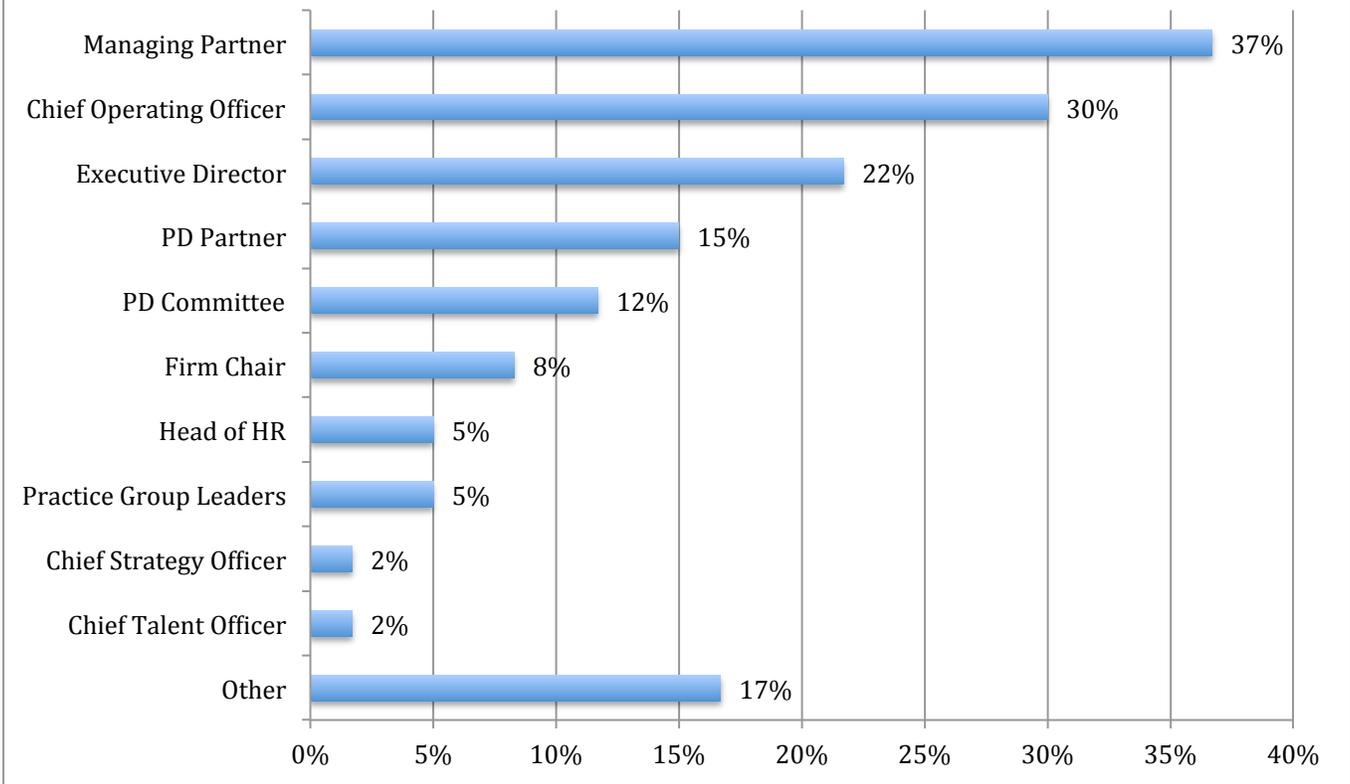
Over one-third (36.7%) of the respondents report to more than one boss, with some of those bosses being groups of people (*e.g.*, a committee, the practice group heads). **Five** such reporting relationships, including both individuals and groups, was the highest number reported by any single respondent. (There may be some benefit in having so many direct connections to firm management. But one has to wonder in such situations how much time is spent meeting and reporting vs. doing actual PD work.)

The breakdown of reporting relationships is shown in Figure 5. It’s interesting to see that the titles for the top management positions at firms are as varied as those for the PD director.

The “Other” category of superiors to whom the Directors report, often in addition to one or more of the positions already listed, includes:

- Administrative Partner
- Chair of Associates Committee
- Department Heads
- Deputy Chair of Firm

Figure 5. To Whom PD Directors Report



- Director of Administration
- Management Committee
- National Talent Management Director
- National Leader of People & Practices
- Professional Personnel Partner
- Senior Director of Attorney Programs

Staffing Levels

The typical staffing profile for PD is a full-time director leading a small staff of 1-5 FTE¹ personnel.

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Directors. The overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents' positions are full-time jobs (one respondent checked "Other" because part of her full-time position is dedicated to functions other than PD; but that is true for many PD directors). The remaining 10% typically have a time commitment of 70-80% (one commented,

"80-100% depending on the day"), although one outlier has a 30% schedule.

We had expected that the part-time positions would all be at smaller firms. Interesting enough, however, all the firms with part-time PD directors are either larger than 1500 lawyers or smaller than 500 lawyers; no part-time positions were reported in the 500-1500 range.

Staff Support. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (73.2%) directly manage a staff of 1-5 FTE personnel; for almost two-thirds (63%), total firm-wide PD staffing is at that same level.

Another 17.9% of respondents directly manage a staff of 6-10 people, meaning that over 90% of respondents manage PD staffs of 10 or fewer individuals. Even among the responding firms with more than 1500 lawyers, only half have over 10 people on their firm-wide PD staffs. Only two, very

¹ Full Time Equivalent. For example, two half-time staff members would equal 1 FTE staff member.

large, firms reported firm-wide PD staffing of more than 20 individuals.

the median number of personnel on the FTE staff and the full range of staff sizes, from smallest to largest, in each category.

Figure 6 below shows, in ascending order of firm size (the number of lawyers in the firm),

Figure 6. Firm-Wide FTE Staffs, by Size of Firm

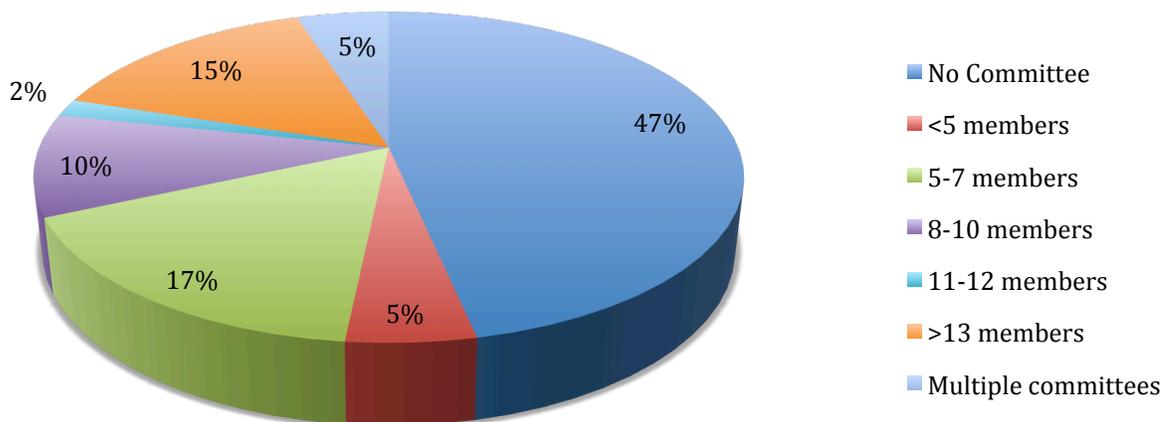
Firm Size	Median Size of FTE Staff	Range of Staff Sizes
Up to 500 lawyers	1-5	1-5
501-1,000	1-5	1-5 to 16-20
1,001-1,500	6-10	6-10 to 11-15
More than 1,500	11-15	6-10 to 26-30

PD Committee

Committee Existence and Size. The overwhelming preference seems to be for either a small PD committee or none at all. Almost half (46.7%) of the responding firms do not have a PD committee, while 31.7% have a committee with 10 or fewer members, with 5-7 being the single most common size

at 16.7%. Altogether only 16.7% have a PD committee with more than 10 members (but a definite minority favors a large committee: 15% have 13 or more committee members). Another 5% of respondents report they have multiple committees for different audiences, practice groups, and departments. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution.

Figure 7. PD Committees

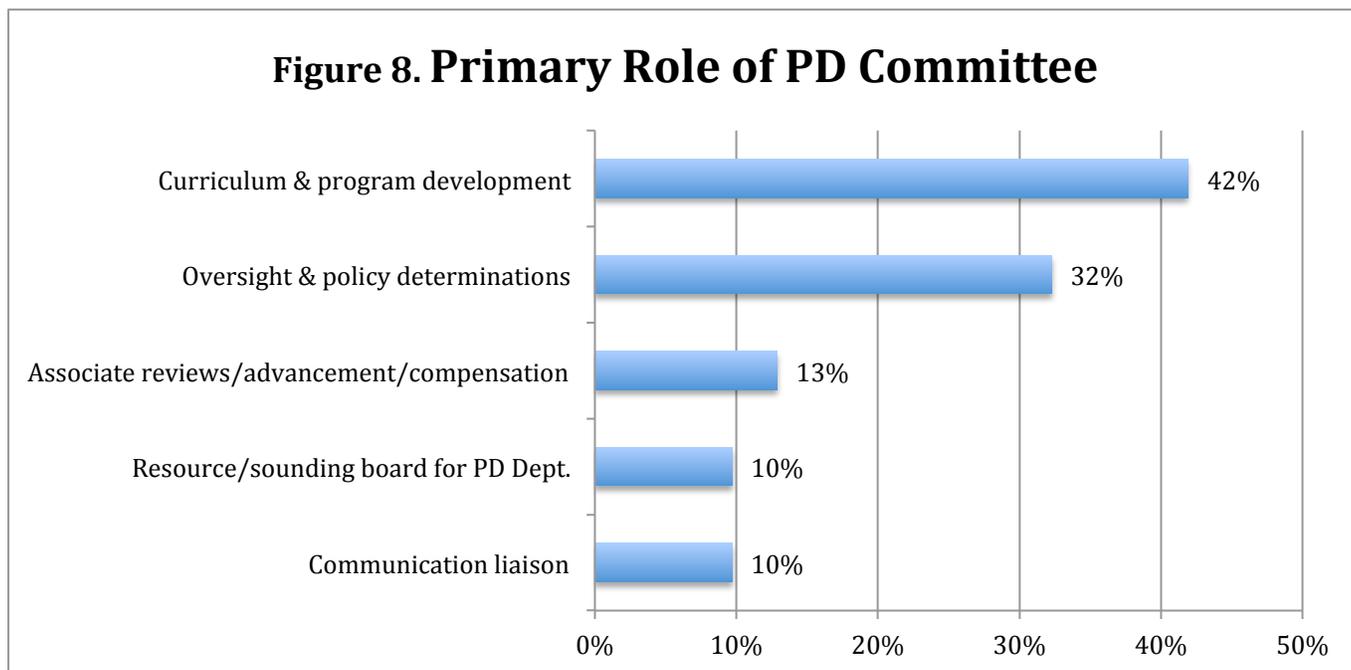


Committee Membership. Of the firms with committees, all (100%) include partners on the committee, and nearly all (96%) include the Director, while half include other firm managers. Fewer than half (47.4%) include associates, and 37.5% include Counsel.

How Members Are Selected. In the great majority (90.3%) of responding firms, firm leaders appoint the members of the PD committee. This, together with the fact that

partners make up most of the members, suggests a very “top-down” source of input to the PD decisions in most firms. Indeed, in only 3% of firms are committee members elected by the associates, and in only 9.7% are they self-selected through volunteering.

Primary Role of Committee. We asked the respondents to tell us what the committee’s “primary” role is. Their descriptions can be generally categorized as shown in Figure 8.



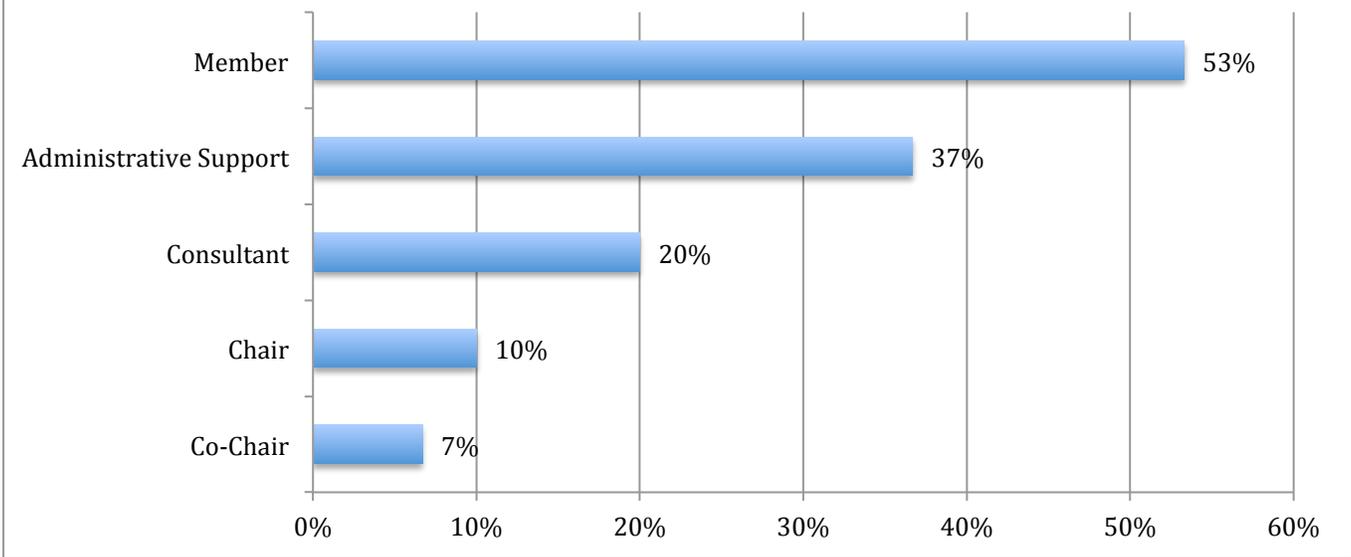
The above percentages add to more than 100% because a few respondents mentioned more than one primary function.

One respondent’s answer highlighted a broader strategic focus for the Committee, saying that its annual plan is expected to

detail “how [the plan’s] objectives [will] assist the partnership in implementing its strategic plan.”

PD Director’s Role on the Committee. In the firms that have a PD committee, the Director’s role is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Director's Role on PD Committee



Again, percentages add to more than 100 because some directors play multiple roles on the committee.

Some of the explanatory comments:

“We have working groups within the committee. I push them and prepare first drafts of almost everything.”

“[I] create agenda and lead meetings along with partner co-chairs.”

“There is no ‘Chair’ of the Committee – we are all ‘Members’; however, the Director is responsible for setting the agenda and leading all meetings.”

“I am not officially a member (only partners are members), but I am treated as a full member by the rest of the committee.”

3. Staffs and Programs Managed

We asked about the breadth and nature of PD Directors’ responsibilities – for what staffs and programs are they responsible, and in what other committees and programs

are they involved? The short answer: the typical PD job is large and varied, but also very much focused on the lawyers.

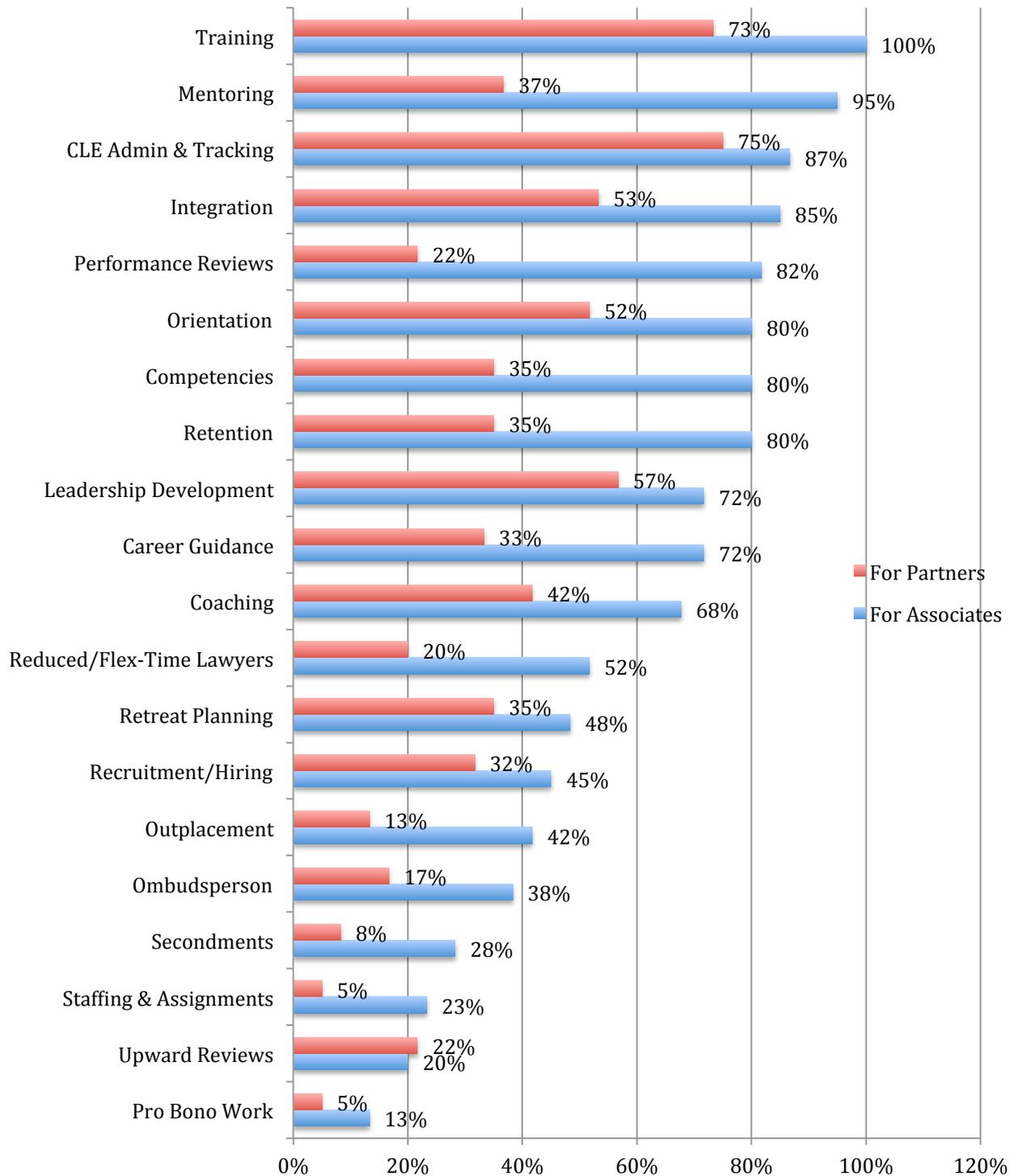
We also asked whether the firm has an intranet portal for PD and, if so, what is on it.

PD Programs Managed

The term “professional development” covers a wide range of possible activities; our question inquired about the Directors’ responsibility for 20 different programs. The top program (no surprise here) is associate training, for which 100% of our respondents are responsible. The top *partner* program for which the Directors are responsible is CLE administration and tracking; but partner training is close behind. See Figure 10 for the breakdowns.

In general, our respondents are more fully engaged in programs for associates than for partners. The only exception to that pattern is with upward reviews, where partners have a slight edge over associates (22% vs. 20%); but that is likely due to the fact that in many firms only partners receive upward reviews. The biggest gap for any one program is the

Figure 10. PD Programs Managed



60-point gap for performance evaluations – 82% are involved in associates’ performance evaluations, but only 22% in partners’ evaluations. Again, however, in many firms only associates’ performance is “evaluated” in the way that term is usually understood.

Altogether, the results show that PD Directors have a full plate of responsibilities. A majority of the respondents manage a dozen associate programs and 5 programs for partners. Significant minorities manage all the rest, at least for associates.

Several respondents added clarifying comments and a few more programs that were not on our list:

“We have Directors of Associates in most of our larger offices who essentially manage the associate hiring, orientation, evaluations, retention, etc. My role is confined to training and CLE, competencies & benchmarks, and various firm policy development projects.”

“[P]ractice group staffing model analysis”

“Exit Interviews for non-partners, strategic placement program for associates and partners”

Responsibility for Staff PD

90% of the respondents have no responsibility for staff PD. 6.7% do include staff in their programming, and 3.3% have limited staff involvement. Clarifying comments from those with limited responsibility for staff:

“We provide some training.”

“Paralegals but not office staff.”

Level of Responsibility for Other Programs

Another 19 programs are often added to the Directors’ plates. We asked about the respondents’ level of involvement with those programs – whether they:

- are primarily responsible
- serve on a committee that’s responsible
- are consulted but not responsible
- are not involved at all

Only one program (PD technology selection at 49.1%) came close to being a primary responsibility for a majority; but the majority of Directors are involved to varying degrees in all but a few of these other programs. Figure 11 lays out the results, in descending order of primary responsibility.

Membership and Role in Related Types of Committees

Most respondents report they are involved with multiple other committees as member, chair, or consultant. The most common of those are shown in Figure 12.

There is probably some overlap in the functions of several of the committees listed in Figure 12 because of the firm-to-firm variations in committee names and responsibilities.

A fascinating variety of other committees was mentioned once each in response to this question. They are:

- Alternative Schedules Committee
- Alumni Committee
- Associate Compensation Committee
- Attorney Integration Committee
- Best Workplace Committee
- Brand Integrity Committee
- Business Development Committee

Figure 11. Responsibility for Other Programs

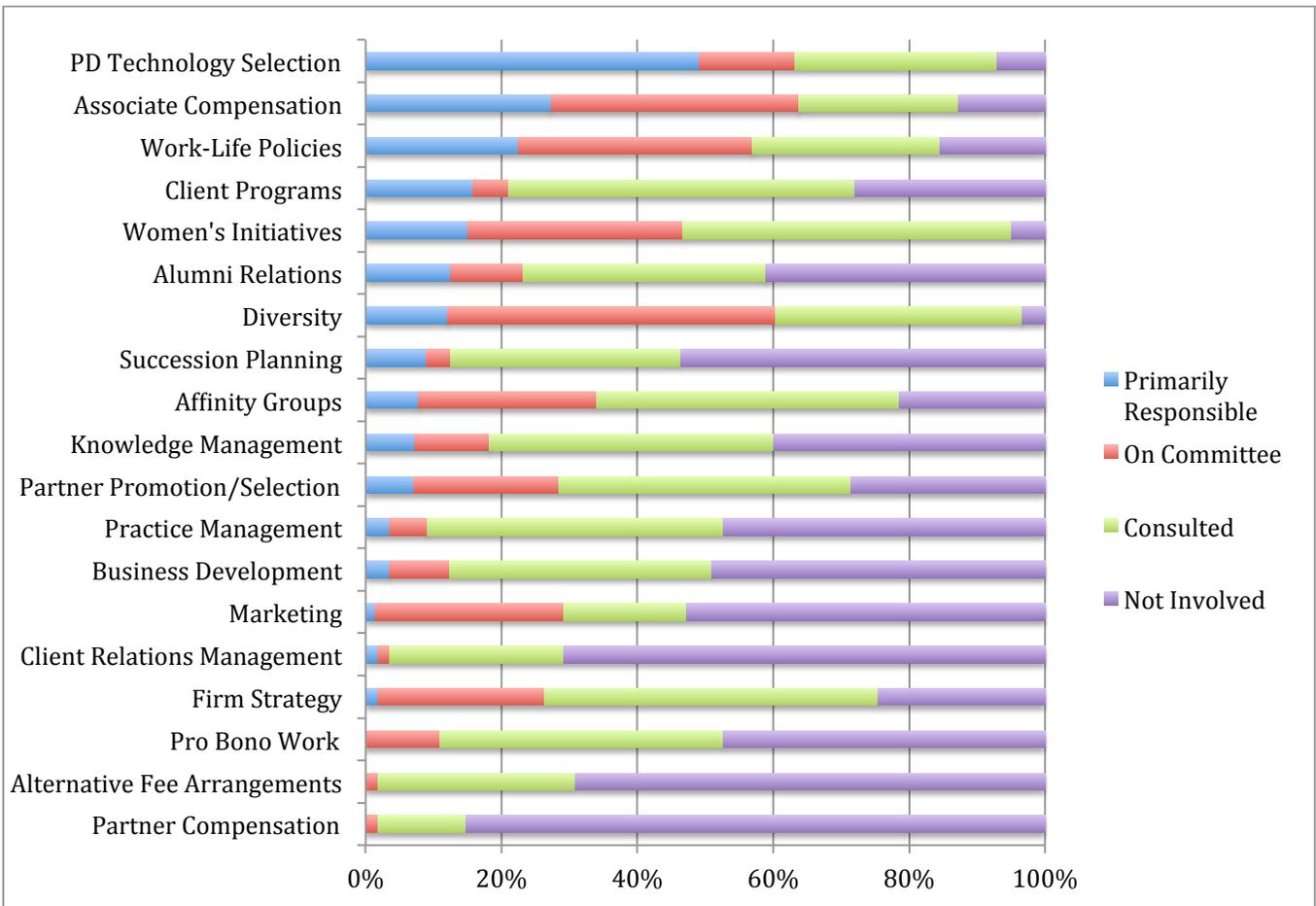
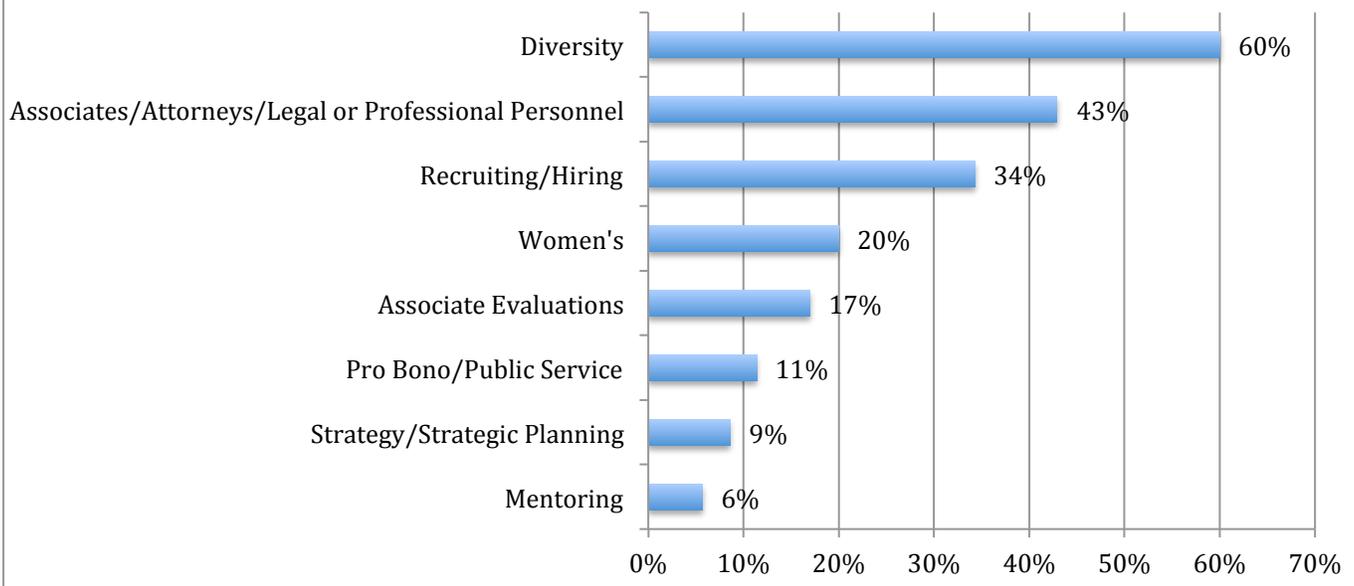


Figure 12. Service on Other Committees



- Internal Communications Committee
- Lateral Integration Committee
- Lateral Partner Recruiting
- Partnership Selection Committee
- Talent Development Advisory Council
- Work Allocation Committee

4. PD Budgets and Director Compensation

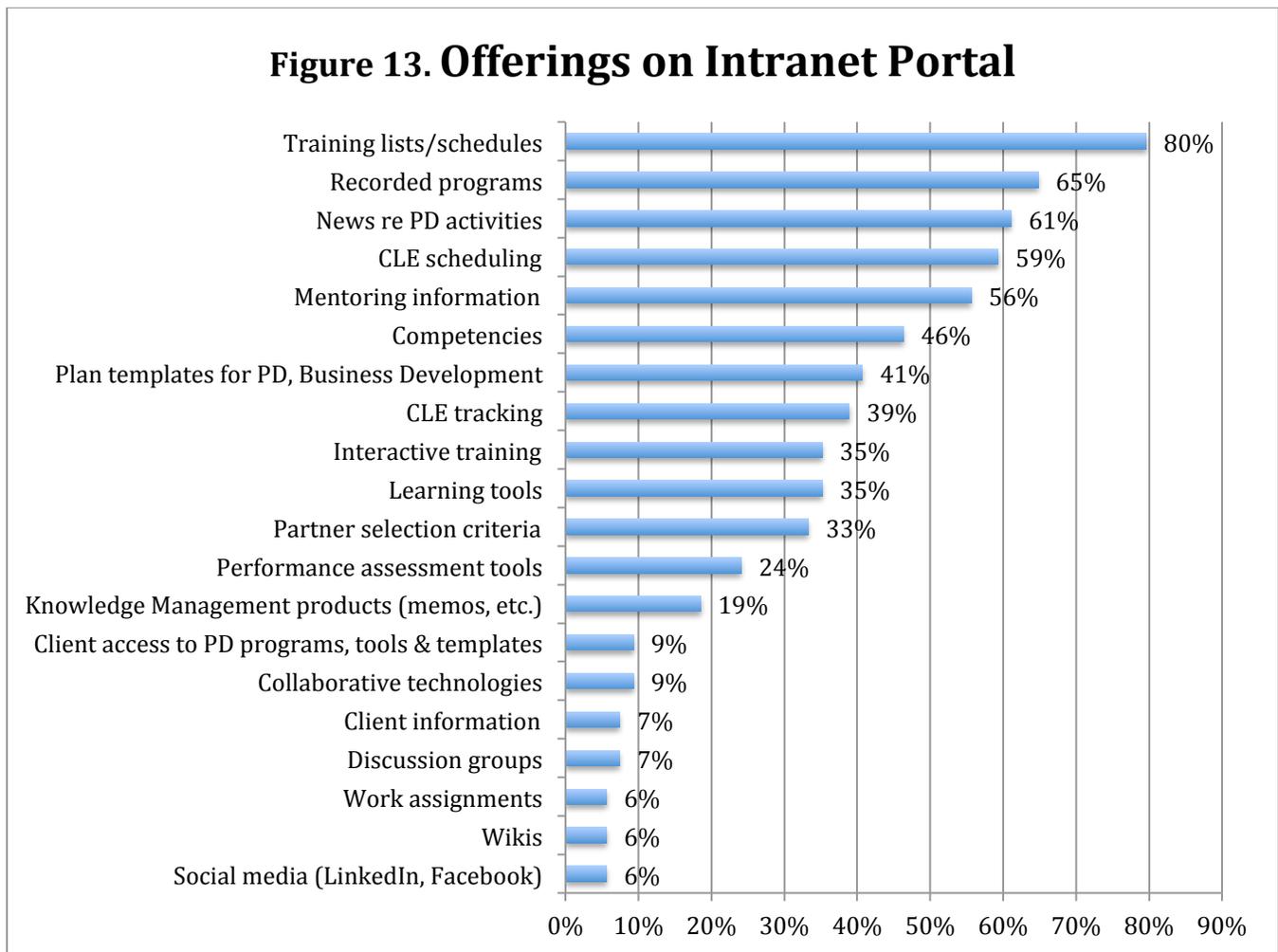
We asked about three aspects of the Directors' budgets for PD:

- Their degree of responsibility for creating and managing the budget,
- How much control they have over PD spending, and
- The size of their budgets.

Intranet Portal and What's on It

87% of the respondents to this question report having an intranet portal for PD. The most common offerings by the firms that have such a portal are shown in Figure 13.

We also asked about Directors' base salaries and total compensation.



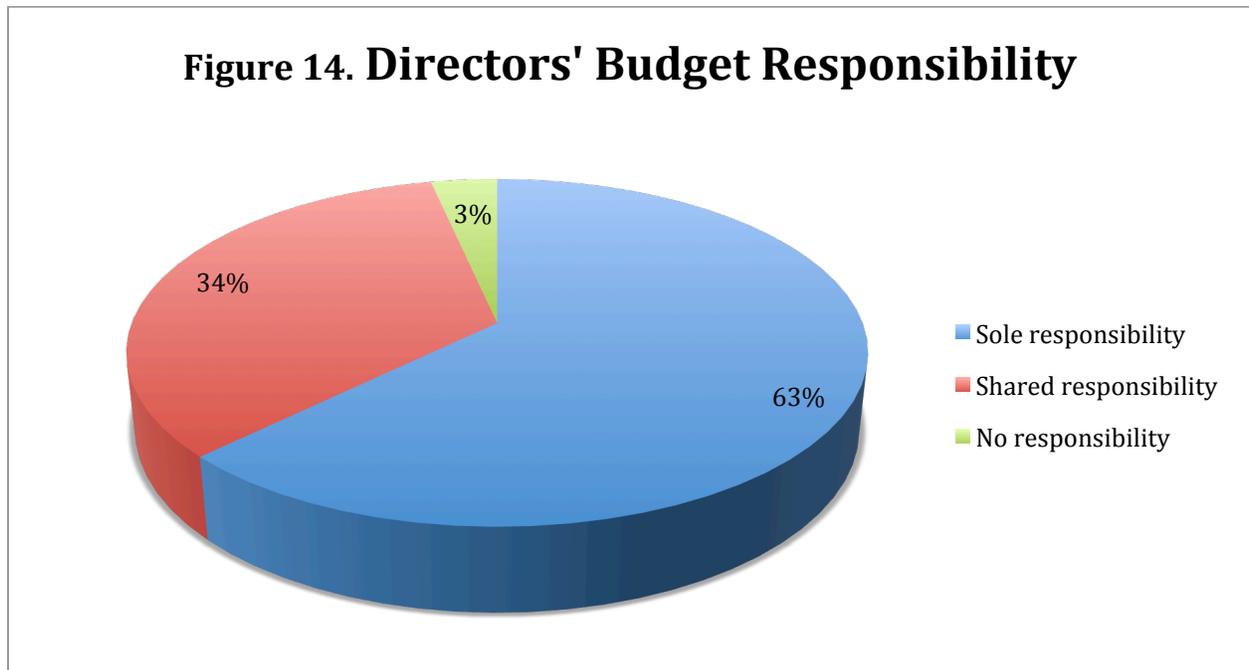
Compared to our survey results in 2002 and 2007, the recession seems to have taken a

bite out of PD budgets but not out of Directors' compensation.

Who creates and monitors the budget?

Most PD Directors (62.7%) report that they are solely responsible for their budgets, and

very few have no budget responsibility at all. Figure 14 shows the breakdown.



Level of Control over PD Expenditures

A slight majority of Directors (56.4%) report they have full authority to make and approve all PD expenditures (including 14.5% who added, “As long as those expenditures are within the approved budget”).

Another 38.2% have authority to make or approve expenditures up to a designated amount. Only 5.5% must seek approval for all PD expenditures.

Size of Annual Budget

PD budgets have taken a hit since the recession. A PDQ survey first asked about budget amounts in January 2007. At that time, a majority of respondents (53%) reported annual PD budgets of over \$500,000. But in 2011, only 40.4% have a budget over \$500,000.

In ascending order of firm size (the number of lawyers in the firm), the respondents’ budgets break down as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. PD Budgets by Firm Size

Firm Size	Median Amount of Budget	Range of Budget Amounts
<500	\$200,000-300,000	\$50,000 - >\$500,000
501-1,000	>\$500,000	<\$50,000 - >\$500,000
1,001-1,500	>\$500,000	\$100,000 - >\$500,000
>1,500	>\$500,000	\$300,000 - >\$500,000

Future Budget Expectations

Not only are budgets down since the recession, but Directors' expectations for future budget increases are down as well.

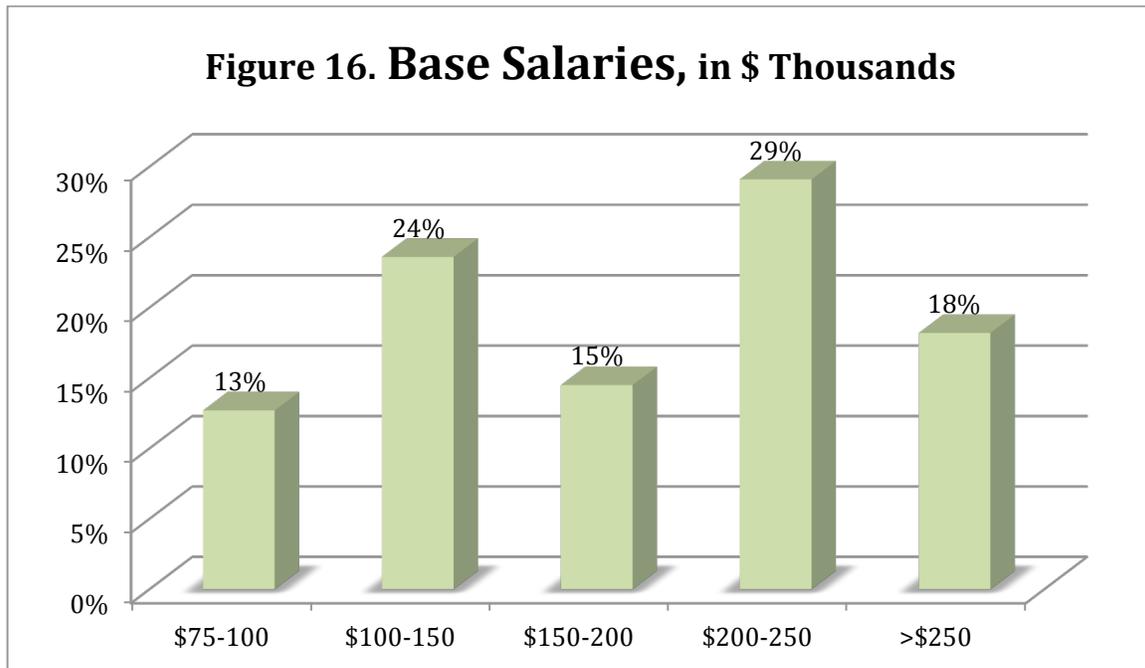
In the 2002 PDQ survey, **58%** of respondents were looking forward to a budget increase: 25% expected substantially more, and 33% somewhat more, than in the preceding year.

In the PDQ survey conducted at the beginning of 2007, just before the downturn, **80%** anticipated an increase: 13% substantially more and 67% somewhat more.

But this year only **45.3%** think their budgets will go up in the near future: 3.8% substantially more and 41.5% somewhat more. No one expects the budget to go down, however; 52.8% believe it will stay the same, and 1.9% do not know what to expect.

Directors' Base Salaries

The median PD Director salary in 2011 (the salary which half of the respondents' salaries are above and half are below) is in the \$150-200K range, but the most common single salary range, at 29.1%, as shown in Figure 16, is \$200-250K.



A 2011 salary survey conducted by the American Society for Training & Development shows that, compared to the Learning & Development² industry in general, law firm PD Directors are extremely well compensated. At the director level, the

industry-wide median salary is in the range of \$90,000-120,000.³

Directors' Total Annual Compensation

PDQ's 2002 and 2007 surveys also asked about total compensation. Despite the

² The term analogous to PD that has been coined by ASTD.

³ Amit B. Mohindra, "The 2011 ASTD Salary Survey: Learning Pays and It Pays to Learn." *T+D*, August 2011, at 58 (Table 2).

recession, PD Directors' compensation is up since the last *PDQ* survey.

In 2007, 20% of our respondents (and 25% at 500+ lawyer firms) received total annual compensation of more than \$250,000 annually. Median compensation was in the \$150-200K range.⁴

In 2011, as shown in Figure 17 on the next page, at least 24.1% of the respondents overall (and at least 41.4% of those at firms of more than 500 lawyers) received total compensation of more than \$250,000.⁵ Bonuses boost the range for the median base salary (which, as noted above, is \$150,000-200,000) by \$50,000 to a median total compensation of \$200,000-250,000. More than half the respondents (53.4%) make over \$200K in total compensation.

In addition, it appears that Directors are increasingly being compensated for their PD chops rather than for being law graduates. In the 2007 *PDQ* survey, 100% of the responding PD leaders who reported annual compensation above \$200,000 were attorneys. In 2011, only 64.5% of Directors reporting that compensation level are lawyers. And only 33% of those making above \$300,000 in 2011 are attorneys; those in that top tier of compensation often have PD-related advanced degrees or certifications instead of, or in addition to, the J.D.

5. Associate Career Development Factors

New Job Categories for Lawyers

We asked several questions about a relatively recent law firm phenomenon: the creation of new, nontraditional legal jobs for lawyers. In most cases, these jobs are held by associates or counsel who go off partnership track or by

lawyers who are hired directly into non-partner track positions. In order to get a sense of how widespread this practice is, the survey inquired about whether firms had lawyers in various categories. These jobs have many different titles, and the same title means different things to different firms, so for purposes of the survey we defined the categories as follows:

1. "Career attorneys" are former associates who are no longer on partnership track but whose skill set or expertise is of continuing value to the firm.
2. "Contract attorneys" are temporary employees, hired directly or through an agency for a particular project or period of time.
3. "Practice support attorneys" manage staffing or other support functions for practice groups. They do not practice law and are not on track for partnership.
4. "Professional services lawyers" specialize in providing knowledge management services to one or more practice groups. They may or may not be on track for partnership.
5. "Project managers" are lawyers who specialize in and spend much or all of their time overseeing the management of legal matters. They may or may not practice law, and may or may not be on partner track.
6. "Staff attorneys/Permanent associates" perform a specific, routine type of work and are not on partnership track.

Figure 18 on the next page shows the proportion of responding firms that employ lawyers in each of these nontraditional positions.

⁴ In 2002, 86% of the respondents' top PD leaders were partners, and their compensation was unknown to the person completing the questionnaire.

⁵ 6.7% of respondents declined to answer our questions about compensation.

Figure 17. Total Annual Compensation, in \$ Thousands

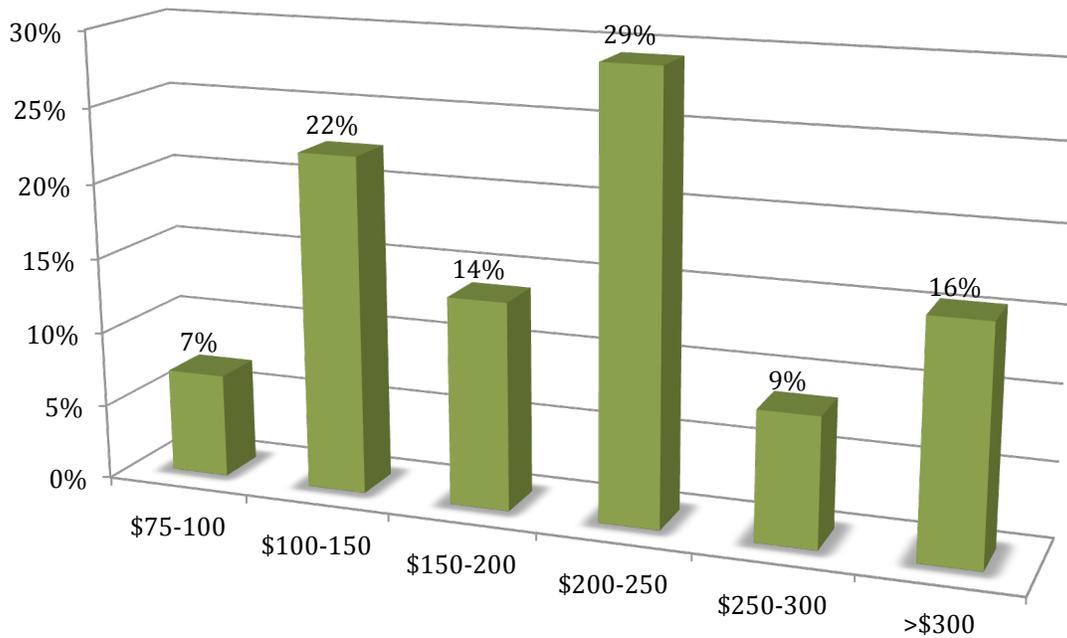
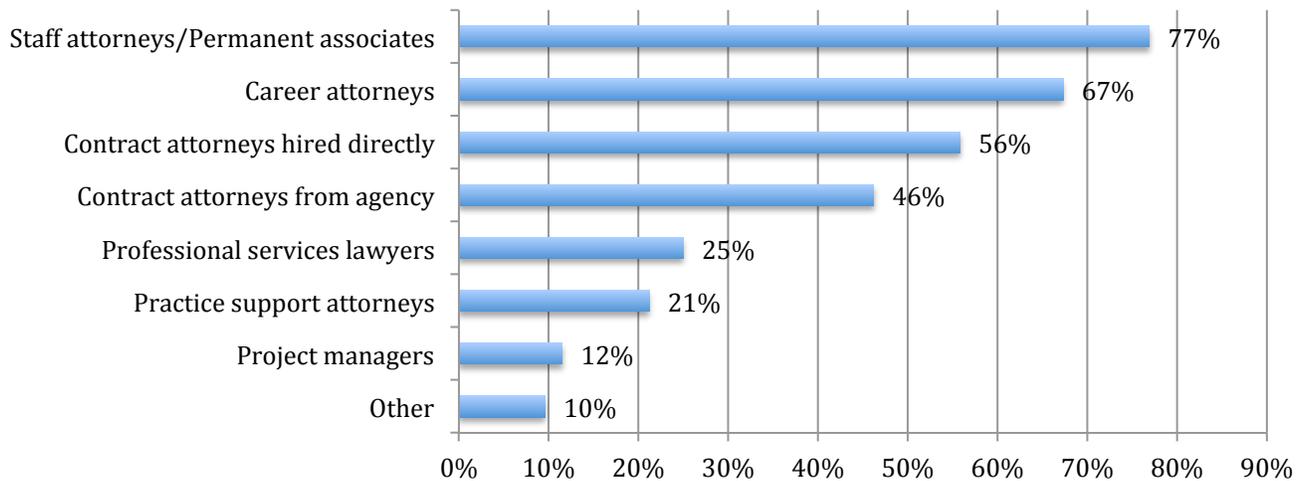


Figure 18. Nontraditional Legal Positions at Responding Firms



The survey results show that many of these jobs are now common in law firms. 76.9% of respondents said their firm has staff attorneys or permanent associates, and 67.3% indicated their firm has career

attorneys. In the past, law firms have frequently hired contract lawyers through staffing agencies. They continue to do that, but today 55.8% of respondents' firms hire contract attorneys directly without using

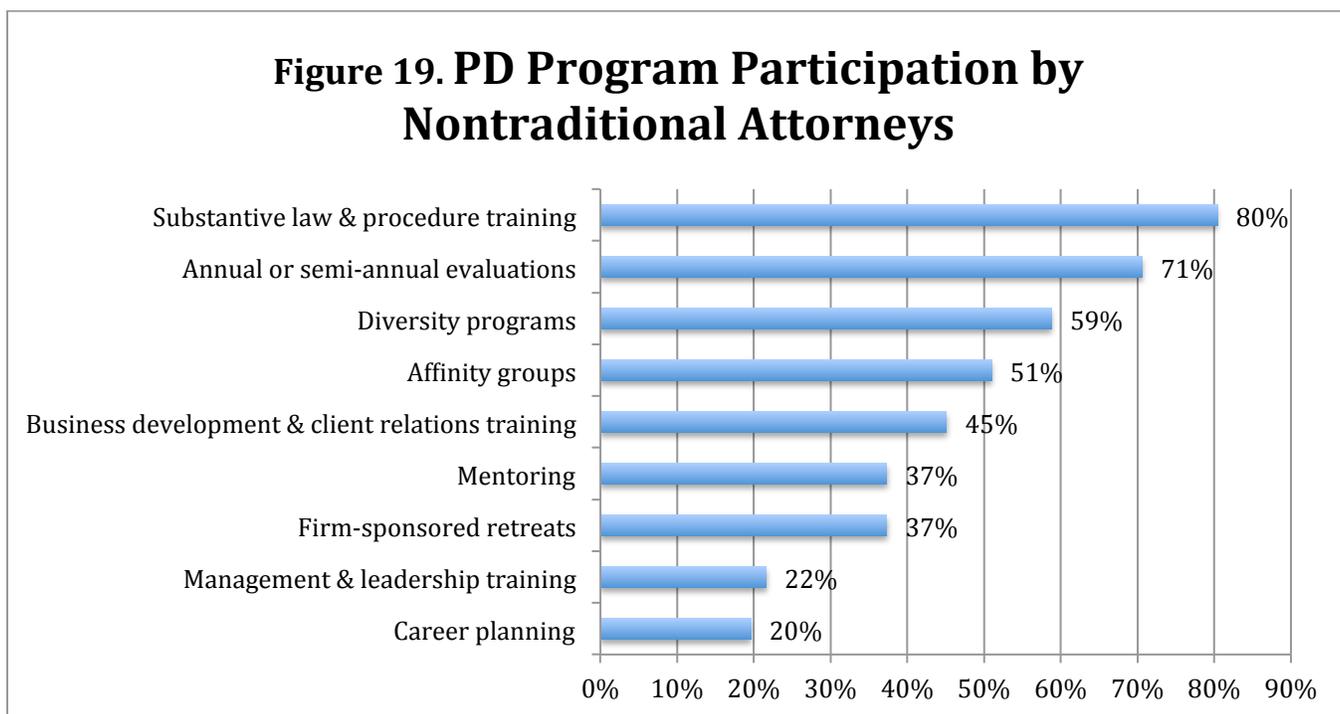
staffing agencies as intermediaries. A quarter of the firms have professional services lawyers, and 21% have practice support attorneys. Only 11.5% of the firms currently have project managers. One respondent commented that the firm uses FlexTime attorneys who work remotely and are paid by the project.

The rise of these new job categories raises questions about how much law firms will

invest in the professional development of lawyers who are outside the conventional partnership track. Most firms that employ such lawyers are providing them with professional development support in several significant ways, as shown in Figure 19.

Some respondents noted in their comments that the status of individual attorneys determines the activities to which they will have access.

Figure 19. PD Program Participation by Nontraditional Attorneys



One concern as these new positions become more prevalent is how these lawyers will be perceived or treated by the firm. Although the survey did not ask this question directly, some of the comments indicated that these lawyers are considered “outsiders” even though they may be included in training and other firm-wide programs. Some Directors who commented distinguished between contract lawyers and lawyers in the other

categories. They noted that contract lawyers do not participate in PD activities.

Choice of Practice Area Specialization

Another area we inquired about was the point at which associates are required to choose a practice area in which to specialize. Early specialization has clearly become the norm. 63.6% of respondents answered that associates must make a choice when they

accept an offer of employment. The other listed time frames received very few responses:

- Within the first 6 months after arrival – 5%
- Within the first year after arrival – 11%
- Within the first 2 years after arrival – 7%
- After rotating through two or more practice areas – 4%

Only 2% respondents said their firms prefer associates to have broad experience in several practice areas, 4% have no set time frame and let them choose whenever they are ready, and 4% do not require associates to specialize at all.

Two respondents commented that their firms treat litigation and transactional practices differently. In litigation, associates cannot choose a specialty until their fourth or fifth year, while transactional associates join a specific practice group right away. Three respondents pointed out that, in Canada, articling students rotate through various practice areas for a year. They then state a practice area preference when they are offered an associate position.

Employment of Career Coaches

We asked Directors about whether their firms employ in-house career coaches whose job it is to coach, advise, and counsel lawyers. Discussions and articles in recent years have suggested that hiring such coaches was becoming common; but, according to our survey responses, this is not the case. The vast majority of respondents' firms – 78% – do not employ internal career coaches. Of the firms that do employ coaches, fewer than half the coaches (44%) are full-time and only half of those coaches are certified. One of the responding Directors is currently pursuing a coaching certification, and another respondent noted that “the Director and Manager of Professional Development ... provide coaching, advi[c]e and counsel as requested.”

6. Work Assignment System

No aspect of professional development is more important than lawyers' actual work experience. We wondered about how much attention law firms are giving to systematizing work assignments and tracking associates' experience. In particular, we wanted to know what firms with competency models are doing to ensure that associates receive the kinds of experience that will enable them to achieve the benchmarks and competency levels that the firm expects.

It turns out that this is one area that is not receiving sufficient attention: 38.2% of respondents said their firms have no formal system for giving associates work assignments. Only 10.9% of respondents' firms have a firm-wide assignment system. Other respondents said that in their firms, some practice groups (29.1%), departments (14.5%), or offices (9.1%) have formal procedures for allocating work. See Figure 20; note that the percentages total more than 100 because some respondents checked more than one answer.

Law firms are also lax in tracking associates' work experience, as shown in Figure 21. One third of respondents (32.7%) do have a firm-wide tracking system; and in some firms work experience is tracked by one or more practice groups (9.1%), departments (12.7%), or offices (1.8%). However, 41.8% of respondents' firms do no tracking at all. One respondent noted that, while there is a firm-wide system, it is not used by all. Another respondent commented:

“Associates track their own experiences and my group keeps track of those through the performance review process.”

Figure 20. Systems for Allocating Associate Assignments

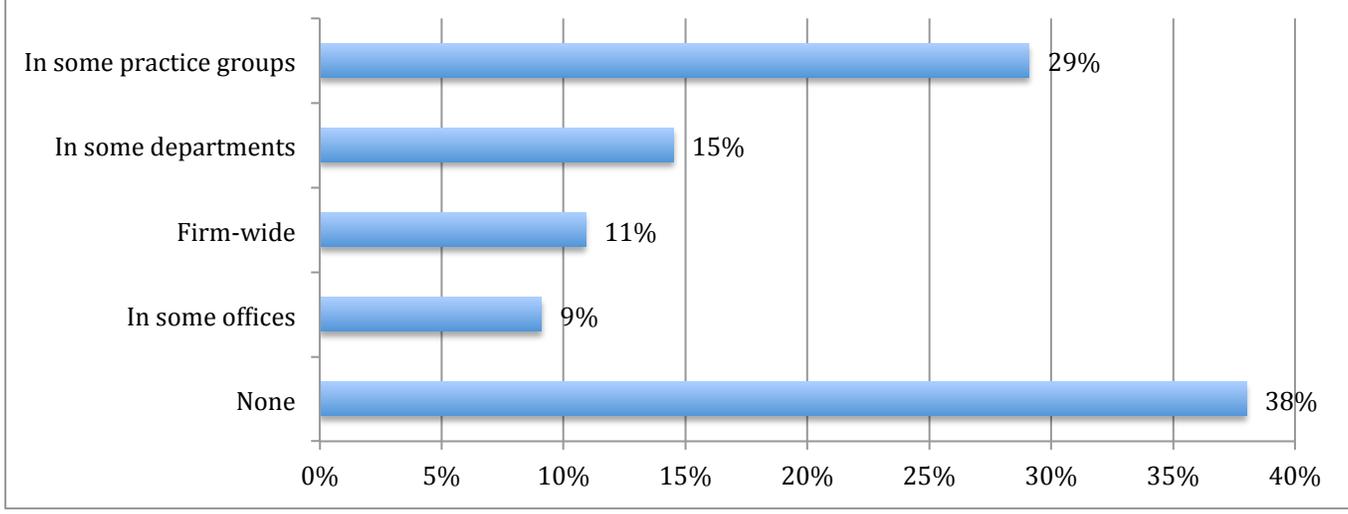
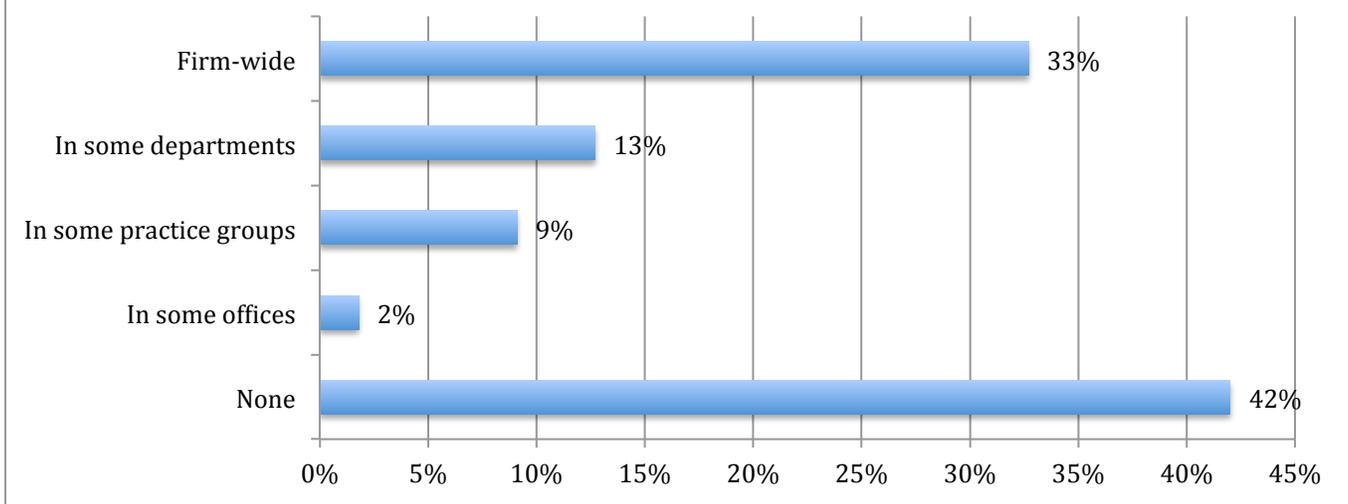


Figure 21. Systems for Tracking Associate Work Experience



Two respondents said they are looking into how to integrate a tracking function with their benchmarks and competency system.

One attraction of benchmark and competency models is that they define specific experiential and developmental expectations for associates. It seems self-evident that a firm that sets explicit

expectations would make a concerted effort to give associates work assignments that will help them meet those expectations. But this is not commonly done. Among our survey respondents, 48.1% are in firms that have adopted a competency model and 25.9% are in the process of or considering adopting one. Yet, of the firms that currently have such a model, only 26.3% have a system in

place to ensure associates receive the work experience needed to develop the skills and behaviors described in the competencies. One respondent commented that, while his/her firm has recruitment competencies and partner competencies, “We don't yet have a formal [competency] model for associates and one of the issues in introducing it is the one identified in this question.” On a more hopeful note, 28.9% of respondents’ firms are in the process of developing such a system, and 15.8% are considering it.

Several respondents added comments to elucidate their answers about competencies and work experience. Two respondents at firms with systems in place to ensure suitable work experience explained:

“At the annual and mid year review we monitor where the associate is in the model and each office is responsible for ensuring the associate receives the appropriate work assignments to enable him/her to move to the next level.”

“We work with our assignment coordinators. We also have an individual development plan that associates fill out and which are reviewed by practice managers.”

Several Directors in firms without a system stated it is the associates’ responsibility to find the right experience, although some of these firms give associates support:

“... [W]e generally put the responsibility on the associates to meet the goals outlined in their evaluation (which is competency based). There is support in place (me) if they would like to meet and have guidance on how to achieve their goals. Also, every 3rd through 8th year associate is given a Prof Dev Partner mentor to help them develop a career plan each year to help meet their goals.”

“Associates update their progress against benchmarks twice a year. If a practice group can't or won't give an associate the opportunities s/he needs, I am to report it to the Management Committee.”

One open-ended question asked Directors to describe their firm’s work assignment processes. Several themes emerged:

- Online workflow reporting by associates is commonly used to determine availability.
- There is considerable variability in how associates receive their assignments:

“Litigation has a coordinator (non-attorney) in each of our domestic offices. Labor & Employment has a firm-wide coordinator (non-attorney). Bankruptcy & Funds have an assignment partner for the whole firm. Corporate has a couple of assignment partners with regional responsibilities. Tax is small/no formal system.”

“Some of our offices have teams to which the associates are assigned, and all work gets assigned through the team.”

“Very much free market system, but some checks and balance to ensure that associates, particularly diverse associates, are receiving assignments with development goals in mind.”

Some firms have work assignment partners or brokers who oversee the assignment process. In some cases, these partners or brokers work with designated associates; in others, they work with all associates in a practice group, department or office. In one firm, “all assignments flow through a manager whose full time responsibility is assignments, gathering feedback and delivering coaching.” In another, the PD Director gives out all first-year associate assignments:

“We have an assignment system for all first year associates. All of their work comes from the pool of submitted assignments. I distribute assignments and monitor workloads. In January of the first year (but in no event later than the associate's first anniversary), the associate can declare an area of specialty. At that time, they can accept up to 50% of their work directly from partners in that area. However, all assignments must still be submitted into the system for workload tracking and evaluation purposes. At the end of the first year, the associate is a full member of his/her chosen group.”

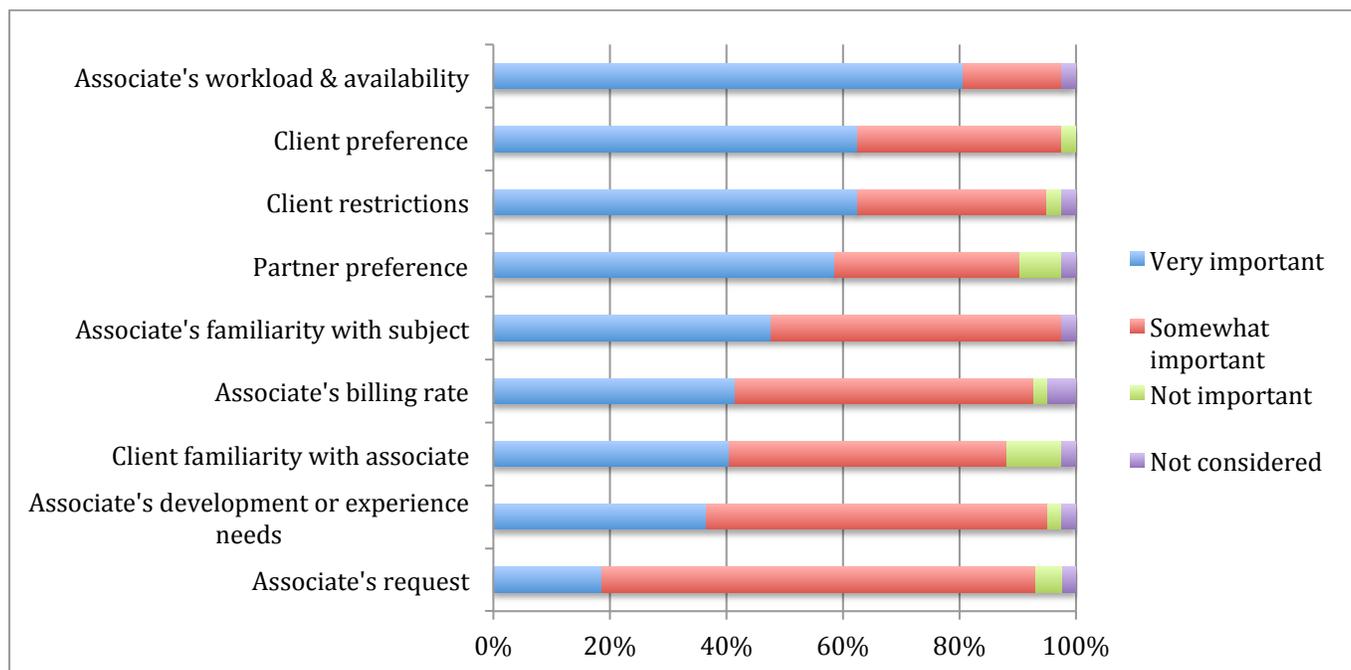
Another of the survey questions asked respondents to rank the importance of nine considerations when making a work assignment to an associate. The scale ranged from “very important” or “somewhat important” to “not important” or “not considered.” The single most important

consideration was the associate's current workload and availability: 82.9% of respondents ranked it as very important, and 17.1% said it was somewhat important. The next three factors ranked as very important were client preference (64.1%), client restrictions (64.1%), and partner preference (60%).

Only 37.5% of respondents said that the associate’s development or experience needs were a very important consideration when making assignments; and the associate’s request was ranked as a very important factor by only 19.5%, the lowest consideration in the “very important” category. However, both of these considerations received far higher rankings in the “somewhat important” category: 78% for associate’s request and 60% for development and experience needs.

See Figure 22 for the complete list of assignment considerations and importance ratings.

Figure 22. Considerations in Assigning Work to Associates



Conclusion

We both attended the birth of the Professional Development Consortium in 1990. At that time, the fledgling organization numbered some two dozen law office PD Directors, most of us brand-new to our roles, who had sought out our peers for support and the sharing of ideas, information, and experiences.

Ida Abbott helps employers manage, retain, and advance legal talent and serves as a mentor and coach to high achieving individuals seeking professional success. A Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management, Ida is co-founder and Director of the Hastings Leadership Academy for Women at Hastings College of the Law, where she is also a Faculty Fellow. Ida was a founding member of the Professional Development Consortium; has led efforts to promote professional development through local, state, and international bar associations; and operates the Professional Development Roundtable for Global Law Firms. Her most recent book is *Women on Top: The Woman's Guide to Leadership and Power in Law Firms* (Thomson Reuters, 2010). She is currently writing the second edition of *Lawyers' Professional Development: The Legal Employer's Comprehensive Guide* and publishes a newsletter, *Management Solutions*, that is available on her website, www.IdaAbbott.com.



Gaye Mara is Publisher and Managing Editor of *PD Quarterly*. She created, implemented, and managed attorney programs at three large law firms over a period of 18 years and subsequently assisted large private and public law offices with attorney development projects for 15 years. Gaye was a founding member of the Professional Development Consortium; served in a variety of offices for the National Association for Law Placement; and co-authored, with Stephen Chitwood and Anita Gottlieb, *A Business Skills Curriculum for Law Firm Associates* (Association of Legal Administrators, 2001), the first published competency model and training plan for law firm associates. She can be reached at maraeg@profdev.com.



It has been wonderfully satisfying to be part of the expansion and increasing professionalism of the PD field over the intervening 21 years. That growth and professionalism are amply illustrated by the results of this survey. The simple fact that we personally know 135 PD Directors and Chiefs in law firms (and that there are many more we do not know) speaks to the growing number of firms that value PD's contributions to lawyer development and firm success.

The survey results evidence the increasing professionalism of the field in numerous ways:

- *Increasing compensation.* Despite the recession, median compensation is up \$50,000 since PDQ's 2007 survey.
- *Rising position in the firm hierarchy.* Almost half of our respondents report to the top leaders (Managing Partner or Firm Chair) of their firms. And one in six chairs or co-chairs the firm's PD Committee.
- *Increasing emphasis on PD-related qualifications,* instead of or in addition to a law practice background. Especially in the top tiers of compensation, where before law degrees dominated almost exclusively, now PD-relevant advanced degrees, professional certifications, and experience from other industries are on the rise.
- Despite the idiosyncratic nature of individual law firms' approaches to management and development, *a common core of programs, resources, and responsibilities* across the profession. For example, 100% of our respondents manage their firms' associate training programs, 95% manage a mentor program, 87% have an intranet portal for PD, and 83% manage all PD activities firmwide.

At the same time, the survey shows there is still much to be done toward accomplishing our primary mission of attorney development. In particular, the recent appearance and expanding adoption of competency models and practice benchmarks for associates holds great promise as an organizing framework. But the majority of firms have yet to match their model of the ideal associate with a system that provides real world associates with the necessary work experience to approach that

ideal standard. And, although lawyers' learning and development needs continue after making partner or accepting a nontraditional position off the partnership track, formal PD involvement unfortunately scales back at that point in most firms.

We look forward to the continued advancement of our own profession and that of the profession we serve.

It's good to learn on the job. It's even better to learn from the experts.

See you in DC at our one "must-do" conference: the annual Professional Development Institute, a joint NALP/ALI-ABA conference produced in collaboration with the Professional Development Consortium. (December 8-9, with a pre-conference day for PDC members only on December 7.)

If you're brand new to PD, NALP's Newer Professionals Forum in San Antonio will include introductory courses for newer PD professionals as well as new recruiting and career services professionals. (February 23-25.)

Download both brochures at www.nalp.org > Conferences & Events.

Book Review

Cementing Professional Connections

Nora Mara

Ari Kaplan, *Reinventing Professional Services: Building Your Business in the Digital Marketplace*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, 2011 (220 pages)

“Unlike entrepreneurs, who recognize the need for failure on the road to success, most professionals are meticulous about their craft to the point of near perfection.... Today, being able to do the work is presumed. . . . The issues are more often about ... value and responsiveness.” (p. 153)

Before I went off to my first year at the University of Pennsylvania, I attended a “Get to Know Penn” night. The speaker talked about knowledge and, more specifically, the vastness of knowledge in the modern age. It was possible, he said, to be a Renaissance man during the Renaissance because there was only so much to know about different subjects. If all knowledge was the skin of an orange, what was knowable in the 16th century covered only a small fraction of it. Today’s knowledge on any one topic or field would cover so much more of the orange that it’s unthinkable for any one person to be an expert in several fields. And the speaker was saying all this years before the explosion of the Internet!

Today’s professionals are experts in increasingly specialized fields and could conceivably spend all their time practicing that specialty and learning even more about it. That said, Ari Kaplan wants these professionals to do more – to conduct webinars, to write blogs, to connect with a broader community, to grow their businesses. Many reading Kaplan’s *Reinventing Professional Services* might understandably wonder, “Why can’t I just do my job? Do I really have to become proficient in technology, social media, and marketing as well as [your field here]?”

“There is a self-service trend afoot,” Kaplan points out, “and professionals are trying to determine their new roles in the process.” (p. 145) As clients become more proactive (researching on the internet before they ever meet with an expert) and have higher expectations for the service they receive, professionals must become entrepreneurs and practices become businesses. Kaplan’s premise is that professionals must make themselves and their expertise more visible to a wider, and choosier, audience. The trick is in finding the best ways to make that expertise visible and then in creating relationships with those who need it and with those whose knowledge complements or adds to it.

If the professional’s goals are to attract today’s clients and offer value to them, the method is relationship building and the tool is technology. “One of the keys to creating opportunity is to build relationships, not just networks.” (p. 185) While technology offers many ways to create networks and stay connected, using it to create and maintain relationships is more of a challenge. *Reinventing Professional Services* sets out to help the reader use technology to connect to and serve clients beyond traditional formats.

Reinventing Professional Services is definitely not a step-by-step how-to guide. It is, however, full of insights, ideas, and

anecdotes of specific ways Kaplan and countless others have used technology in simple or innovative ways. The professionals and their stories come from varied fields and offer diverse solutions to diverse needs. There is the real estate company in Miami that started a blog (linked to its website) in response to the changing ways people look for homes and realtors. And the accountant who has set up subscriptions for clients to access basic information online and who offers them weekly live-streaming videos on selected topics. At times I felt there were too many anecdotes, but the variety ensures that there is something for everyone.

Kaplan has arranged the book in sections – positioning yourself for change, goal setting, adapting to and experimenting with technology, and taking risks – and concludes with a reminder that the overarching goal with all of this is to cultivate a community of people whose needs you know and who require and value your expertise. He notes

that the book does not need to be read from start to finish, that readers can dive into the areas that look most useful for them. I found the first three and the last three chapters to be the most useful – the first three because they made the case for innovation and the last three because they offered very concrete suggestions.

Reinventing Professional Services seems most geared toward the entrepreneur, the businessperson looking to gain more visibility and, well, business. Its value to the individual starting out or repositioning him or herself is obvious. Using Kaplan's suggestions for a larger, more established organization might pose a greater challenge. Within that larger organization, however, there could be a real place for exactly the types of technology use and relationship building Kaplan sets out. His suggestions and copious resources offer the stepping-off point; the risk-taking is up to you.

☉ **The Learning Lab** column will resume in the February issue.

Letter from the Publisher

Dear Subscribers and Contributors,

We've moved! This October my husband Andy and I moved from Alexandria, VA to the outskirts of Seaford, Delaware, a small town on the Delmarva (Delaware/Maryland/Virginia) Peninsula that separates the Atlantic Ocean from the Chesapeake Bay. Since I have a home office, this was both a home and office move.

After giving out my cell phone number as the new office number, I learned upon moving in that the only cell reception here is in town. (Come on, infrastructure project!) So I now have a new office line -- see below for our current contact information.

On another note, we have been teasing you for far too long with the prospect of a password-accessible archive of *PDQ* back issues. The move, and our conversion from PC to Mac before that, keeps pushing the project back (the joys of being a sole proprietor!). But the archive is now up, and work has begun on the database that will give subscribers access to it. In the meantime, if you see something in the articles index (online at www.profdev.com) that you'd like a copy of, please let me know and I'll send it to you.

We are enjoying the wide open spaces and lack of congestion here. The stargazing is spectacular – no ambient light to interfere; it's really *dark* here at night! In the daytime, looking out the windows by my desk, I can see the expanse of sunny lawn that will be planted with a kitchen garden next spring.

I was going to tell you a little about the interesting history of Seaford, the former Nylon Capital of the World; but it's fall, and you probably don't have time to read it. Another day, perhaps. I hope you will get something useful from reading Ida's and my report of our PD officers' survey and Nora's review of Ari Kaplan's latest book in this issue.

I hope it's been a good fall for all of you, and that you and your organizations are emerging, perhaps leaner, but also stronger and smarter, from the tough times of the past few years. May Thanksgiving find you and yours with much to be thankful for.

Warmest regards,



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Professional Developments

Events

Legal Profession:

- 12/7/11, Washington, DC. *Meeting of the Professional Development Consortium* (members only). Professional Development Consortium, www.pdclegal.org.
- 12/8-9/11, Washington, DC. *Professional Development Institute 2011*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.
- 1/28-31/12, New Orleans, LA. *48th Mid-Year Meeting*. Association for Continuing Legal Education, www.aclea.org.
- 2/23-25/12, San Antonio, TX. *NALP Newer Professionals' Forum*. National Association for Law Placement, www.nalp.org.

General Audience:

- 11/2/11, Washington, DC. *Government Workforce Conference: Learning Innovations*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.
- 11/6-9/11, Orlando, FL. *Learning 2011*. Masie Center, www.masie.com.
- 11/14-15/11, Arlington, VA. *Learning Transfer Conference*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.
- 11/16-18/11, Singapore. *ASTD STADA Asia Pacific Conference*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.
- 1/25-27/12, Las Vegas, NV. *ASTD TechKnowledge Conference & Exposition*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.
- 2/13-15/12, Atlanta, GA. *35th Annual Training 2012 Conference & Expo*. Training magazine, <http://www.trainingconference.com>.
- 4/20-23/12, Toronto, ON. *THE Performance Improvement Conference 2012*. International Society for Performance Improvement, www.ispi.org.
- 5/6-9/12, Denver, CO. *ASTD 2012 International Conference & Exposition*. American Society for Training & Development, www.astd.org.

Certificate & 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)
- Business Essentials Certificate: Strategy, Finance, Marketing (3 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)
- E-Learning Instructional Design Certificate (2 days)
- Essentials of Adult Learning (2 weeks, online only)
- 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 only. 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. It includes:

- Course Module I, Leadership Coaching Foundation
- Course Module II, Creating Awareness
- Course Module III, Coaching Skills
- Course Module IV, Coaching Skills in Action
- Course Module V, The Process and Business of Coaching

Registration for the Fall 2011 class (October 2011-February 2012) is closed; the Spring 2012 schedule is not yet published.

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

Ithaca College Online Professional Certificate Programs, 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:

- 11/2/11ff. *Designing E-Learning with Captivate Certificate*. (3 sessions)
- 11/2/11ff. *Instructional Design: Performance-Based and Results-Focused Certificate*. (4 sessions)
- 11/3/11ff. *Assessment and Evaluation Clinic: Focus Your Efforts and Prove Your Worth*. (3 sessions)
- 11/7/11ff. *Performance Consulting Certificate: Smart Tools and Techniques for Making the Transition*. (4 sessions)
- 11/14/11ff. *Social Media for Trainers Certificate*. (3 sessions)
- 11/15/11ff. *The Brain Science Clinic: Using Six Principles to Make Training Stick*. (2 sessions)
- 11/29/11ff. *Scenario-Based E-Learning Certificate*. (4 sessions)
- 3/8/12ff. *Training Manager Certificate: Managing the Training Function for Bottom-Line Results*. (4 sessions)
- 3/15/12ff. *Instructional Design: Performance-Based and Results-Focused*. (4 sessions)
- 6/5/12ff. *Training Coordinator Certificate: A Consulting Approach to Coordinating the Training Function*. (4 sessions)

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/.

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. (See article describing this program in our February 2011 issue.)

University of Pennsylvania Executive Education for Chief Learning Officers.

Penn's Wharton School and Graduate School of Education, in consultation with the training industry, teamed in 2006 to create an executive education program for Chief Learning Officers. In December 2010 the program was retitled *PennCLO* and draws faculty from across the University. The program "meets for two separate weeks each semester, allowing students to continue working while they study" and offers "a blend of on-site classes, distance learning, and 'field'-based projects" in six course blocks:

1. Strategic leadership
2. Workplace learning
3. Business acumen
4. Evidence-based decision making
5. Technology for work-based learning
6. Dissertation (for EdD candidates)

Students in the program may pursue a master's or doctoral degree from Penn's Graduate School of Education.

<http://pennclo.com>

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

www.VillanovaU.com/MHRD.

News

Virtual programs and networking: The American Lawyer's *2011 Law Firm Technology Survey* reports that 99% of the responding firms use videoconferencing – 63% for in-house training, and 8% for outside CLE – and that 75% use social networking platforms (96% of them LinkedIn, and 66% each Facebook and Twitter). Law Technology News, www.law.com/jsp/tal/PubArticleTAL.jsp?id=1202520497184.

Speaking of **videoconferencing**, Elliott Masie's 9/27 Learning TRENDS e-newsletter has a list of succinct, practical tips for anyone presenting from his/her desk via webcam, including "Move the frame with your video to the top and close to the webcam, so you are looking right at the camera." (www.trends.masie.com)

Sensible shoes for training: From Elliott Masie's 8/15 newsletter, results of a survey of stand-up trainers' favorite shoes and ideas for foot comfort. Top choices for women: Dansko shoes and clogs and Clarks' Unstructured collection; for heels, if necessary, low-heeled Aerosoles or Easy Spirit. For men: the Rockport walking shoe, Encounter, or ColeHaan loafers with Nike Air technology. Other suggestions included switching shoes halfway through the day, and using orthotic inserts.

Resources

The NALP Foundation has just released **Leading Law Firm Professional Development**, a “comprehensive study of the professional development efforts inside law firms,” based on data collected from over 200 PD administrators and about 1,500 associates in the U.S. and Canada. We haven’t had a chance to read it yet, but it appears to cover some of the same topics as our survey reported in this issue. Information and ordering at www.nalpfoundation.org.

Managing Knowledge Workers. A literature review reported in the June issue of the *International Journal of Management* finds that the most valuable employees of knowledge organizations – those with “high levels of education, interpersonal communication and information

processing skills, and motivation to add value to the organization” – are best motivated and retained by employers who offer:

- Challenging, meaningful work
- Learning and career development opportunities
- Adequate resources
- A supportive work environment
- Recognition for their contributions

Carleton, Karen, “How to Motivate and Retain Knowledge Workers in Organizations: A Review of the Literature.” *International Journal of Management*, June 2011, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 459. (Not available online.)

