

[Law: Develop Your Next Generation](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 10th, 2015

I have some questions for you.

But, before I ask them, if you are a Legal Marketing Association member, Shawn Tuma and I will be doing a webinar for you on February 17. Here is a link to the registration: [Simple Ways to Effectively Use Social Media to Help Build Your Law Practice Sponsored by the Social Media SIG.](#)

Back to the questions:

1. Are your star associates staying with your firm?
2. Are they learning the skills that make them valuable to your clients?
3. Are your partners behind the effort to train and develop the associates?
4. What are effective ways to train and develop them?



I got the opportunity to answer these questions during a presentation to managing partners at an annual bar association meeting. I loved the title they gave me. It gave me the opportunity to focus on how to connect with the 'next generation,' make the business case for developing them, and then give specific ideas on how to do it.

How do you connect with your next generation? Associate lawyers want to be part of a law firm that:

- Is honest with them and does not “sugar coat” what it will be like to work at the firm after graduation;
- Has a clear sense of purpose, vision, and core values, and makes clear what each lawyer can do to contribute to the firm’s success;
- Emphasizes the importance of teamwork and recognizes the contribution of even the most junior lawyer;
- Offers challenging assignments;
- Focuses on training and development of its lawyers;
- Models the behavior it expects from associates;
- Provides mentoring and coaching;
- Provides constant feedback rather than just one or two times a year;
- Has the most up-to-date technology and uses it;
- Appreciates diversity and embraces it;
- Focuses less on hours and more on the quality of the work done by associates; and
- Is a fun place to work.

How do you make the business case? Your partners know they cannot make rain alone and your clients want your junior lawyers to be as prepared to help them as your senior lawyers.

When I was the partner responsible for attorney development in my firm, I made the business case to my partners. Knowing my partners would need proof of my argument, I offered it from two books.

In *Aligning the Stars* authors Jay Lorsch and Thomas Tierney state:

- “Starmaking” is more important to long term success than “rainmaking”;
- The people you pay are more important over time than the people who pay you; and
- Developing a star is a multiyear task.

David Maister produced evidence of these premises in *Practice What You Preach*. Based on his review of the most successful professional service firms, he concluded:

- You must train, energize, and excite your people;
- If you do, the quality of work and service will be increased; and
- If it is, the profitability of the firm will be increased.

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.