

[12 Tips on How to Succeed as a Law Firm Associate](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 4th, 2015

[Richard Beem](#) (Rich) is a Chicago based patent lawyer I have known and coached a couple of years. A few weeks ago Rich launched his new blog: [Beem on Patents](#).



Over time, I learned that Rich has also mentored and helped young lawyers over the years. I asked him to share with you some of his tips for law firm associates.

1. The business of a law firm is to deliver, bill and collect ethically for legal services.
2. Partners may be your best clients. Find a mentor and sponsors who will take an interest in you and support your career development and entry into partnership. When you're not writing work product, get out of your private office, get off e-mail, and take initiative to check in with partners, clients and others face-to-face or at least by telephone. Work with a variety of partners, clients, peers and staff.
3. Deliver and bill 2,000 hours per year of quality work that can actually be billed to clients; invest a total of 2,500 hours each year in your career, and report all of that time.

4. Aim to work and bill 10 hours a day, 50 hours a week, to get and stay ahead of your annual goal. Finish and deliver a project before you call it a day or a week. This will require some evening or weekend work.
5. Deliver work early, way ahead of deadlines.
6. In sum: Crank it out. Deliver a substantive communication or reply brief in half a day, a longer document or principal brief in two or three days of blocked-out time and cranked-out work.
7. Follow up with the responsible partner until the work is delivered to the client, filed if applicable, billed and collected.
8. Admit mistakes promptly to a responsible partner, and propose and be ready to execute a remedial plan of action.
9. Participate in firm-sponsored initiatives, such as recruiting, and report that time.
10. Write a one-page business development plan and commit to it with someone who will hold you accountable. Leadership at the bar and development of relationships with referrers should be part of your plan.
11. Set a goal to by a certain year of your practice bring in new business revenues that equal or exceed your annual compensation package. As you progress, the multiplier may grow to two or three or more.
12. Commit from the beginning to stay with your firm for at least four years. Your fulfillment of that commitment will prove that you have mastered basic skills of law practice and that you are productive.

Good luck! I wish you great success.

Thank you Rich for some great ideas.

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.

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