

[Client Service: Energize Your Professional Staff](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 1st, 2015

I recently did a presentation for a law firm on client service. One thing I shared was clients may not easily recognize the quality of your legal work, but they can easily recognize the quality of your service and it begins with your staff.

I published this blog in 2011. It is worth reading again and if you want more on client service, here is a link to my [Client Service eBook](#).

It's 5:00 AM and I am sitting in the Admiral's Club at the Philadelphia airport. For the last three nights I have stayed at the [Ritz Carlton](#).

As you likely know Ritz Carlton refers to its staff as "ladies and gentlemen." The Ritz Carlton Leadership Center even has a [blog](#) that occasionally features some of their ladies and gentlemen. As you also know, law Firms refer to their staff as "non-lawyers." I suspect the morale of the Ritz Carlton ladies and gentlemen is greater than your non-lawyers.

Isn't the professional staff of a law firm as important to the level of service clients receive as the ladies and gentlemen who work with Ritz Carlton? When I practiced law, I thought so, and after reading Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles book [Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach To Customer Service](#)



I decided to create a "Plus One Client Service" program in each of our offices.

I wanted to share with you the game plan in case you want to start a program. We created office contests. Here is the plan one of our offices used that your office can use as a model:

1. Purchase several copies of the book and circulate to your staff.
2. Ask each staff member to answer the three *Raving Fans* secrets:
 - o What do you want?

- What do your clients (lawyers in the office and clients) want?
 - What three things can we do to really make a difference with our clients?
3. For each service area decide:
- What your service area wants.
 - What your service area's clients want.
 - What three things your service area can do to make the greatest difference.
4. Then the office administrator announces the contest. The staff will vote at the end of the year for which person in the office best represents the "Raving Fans" ideals. The prize might be weekend at a resort.
5. Begin putting into practice: Each staff group in the office sets three top goals to be handled consistently Plus One.
6. Long Term Goal: The staff discusses and creates their purpose, core values and mission statement of how they want to work as a team.
7. Then, for the rest of the year the office staff shares and celebrates delivering plus one service.
8. At the end of the year the staff in the office votes on the Plus One award.

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.