

Exhibit Emotional Intelligence at Law School This Fall

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He has helped thousands of lawyers, law students, legal administrators, paralegals, litigation support professionals and legal technology vendors create opportunity, foster stronger relationships and interact more effectively with clients, prospects and colleagues. He can be reached at 646.641.0600 and Ari@AriKaplanAdvisors.com. For more information visit <http://www.AriKaplanAdvisors.com>.

As students begin returning to school, they should be excited about the sea change afoot.

With a focus on networking, business development and relationship building, there is an unprecedented collaboration occurring between those institutions that produce lawyers and others that employ them. "Law schools and law firms are listening to each other more," says Carol Sprague, the President of the National Association for Law Placement, and the Director of Associate/Alumni Relations & Attorney Recruiting at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in New York.

That exchange means that students should concentrate not only on how to practice law, but what ultimately contributes to a thriving legal career. At law firms, "Training on how to service clients, how to be efficient, and how to solve problems needs to happen earlier," says Sprague. As a result, law students that demonstrate that emotional intelligence are likely to stand out given its renewed emphasis following graduation.

As schools and firms are sharing ideas on best practices, students should listen this fall from a social media perspective ([these 50 Tips and Tools from OnlineColleges.net may be useful in getting started](#)). In order to identify the issues that are of importance, take note of discussions that are occurring via Twitter, LinkedIn and [Avvo](#). In addition, consider gaining a broader perspective by quickly identifying how other professionals are characterizing the issues you are researching in and outside of the classroom.

Those with part-time jobs should leverage free online document assembly tools where a smaller firm or legal office does not have a trusted form of agreement. [WhichDraft.com](#) and [RocketLawyer.com](#) are both sites founded by attorneys that offer these services. The mere discussion of such resources may reflect on your ability to creatively address client service in a proficient manner.



Supplement your creative thinking about the work by finding ways to interact with a core group of mentoring advisors. Seek their advice, serve as a resource and follow up when appropriate. Those three techniques will allow you to remain connected to the individuals with whom you interact long after this semester and your tenure in school. Also, attend webinars and bar association events that will help you hone these skills.

As internship supervisors and employers complete their evaluations of your performance, they will be looking for emotional intellect in the relationship-driven core competencies, as well as traditional academic acumen. This new layer of evaluation presents a great chance for you to distinguish yourself. And, since the assessment process is novel, you are more likely to be reviewed based on the sincere, albeit imperfect, effort, rather than an elusive perfect execution.

Individuals that demonstrate thoughtfulness for the needs of an organization's clients, the institution's goals and the state of the legal industry will distinguish themselves.

As such, leverage the power of technology over the next few months, not just for information, but also for interaction. Introduce your contacts to new strategies. Consider participating in an internal roundtable discussion on social media. Attorneys and others may not expect it, but they will attend and are likely to remember your ideas. Ask those you meet about the technology they use to manage their practices or business development strategies. If they struggle with the answer, occasionally share ideas that may help.

And, when you meet someone, add a follow-up call or e-mail to your electronic calendar. For instance, if during a conversation someone shares an important court date, a key client meeting or a personal event, set a reminder to ask him or her about it in a week, a month or even longer, depending on the appropriate timing. Every interface is an opportunity. Even missed opportunities can be a great source of positive momentum in the future.

Ultimately, it is critical in the recovering market that you take advantage of the open mindset that you will experience this fall because it may not necessarily be indicative of the future as the focus on emotional intelligence could be fleeting. The economic recovery is actually a threat to this trend. "When the market picks up there will be a natural instinct to forget about it, like the pain of childbirth," Sprague notes.

That means that if 2011 is the boom year everyone hopes it will be, next fall could be very different. For those who capitalize on the profession's current renaissance and experiment with creating genuine opportunity, it will be a remarkable foundation on which to build a vibrant vocation.

[Ari Kaplan](#) is the author of *The Opportunity Maker: Strategies for Inspiring Your Legal Career Through Creative Networking and Business Development*. He speaks at [law schools](#), law firms, ALA chapters, [colleges](#) and bar associations nationwide about how individuals can stand out in today's stagnant economy. Click on the link to watch his webinar: [Five Ways Your Website Can Welcome Your Audience By Converting Clicks Into Clients](#).

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