

[2015 Planning: Look Forward and Work Backward](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 31st, 2014

At the end of this year, I am repeating blog posts on planning written by lawyers I coach. I have updated the posts with each lawyer so that it now covers how they are creating their 2015 business plan. I asked lawyers I have coached to share with you how they are preparing their 2015 business plan.

[James J. O’Keeffe](#), a partner with [Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore](#), shared with me how he is preparing his 2015 business plan. Jay writes one of my favorite blogs: [De Novo: A Virginia Appellate Law Blog](#).



I’m preparing my 2015 business plan by looking forward and working backward. Based on our coaching sessions and some of the books that you’ve recommended, I’ve got a list of long-term goals defining where I’d like to be in five and ten years in each of my roles—father, husband, productive lawyer, client developer, etc. Working backward from those,

I’ve decided where I’d like to be at the end of 2015 with respect to each role. I used those targets to identify benchmarks that I’d like to meet throughout the year. I’ve tried

to those benchmarks are objectively quantifiable, challenging, and more or less within my control.

I know that some people find it useful to break their yearly plans down by hours, quarters, weeks, and so on. That doesn't do very much for me. With three small kids, a dog, and a busy job, yearly planning beyond the "big rocks" is just too ambitious right now.

If something is important, I will get it done. If not, there's no sense in planning for it, anyway. As the year progresses, I plan my activities on a weekly basis and review my goals quarterly. That somewhat mitigates the lack of precision in my up-front planning. But trying to sit down right now and figure that I have x hours of investment time, to be divided across y activities over z weeks would only set me up for failure. It would also drive me nuts.

Thanks to Jay, Kevin and Tricia for sharing their ideas on planning. I hope you found an approach that will work for you. A couple of weeks ago a State YLD leader asked me about coming to her state and doing a program for the young lawyers. I told her I would enjoy doing it. But, I thought the young lawyers would get more from monthly Webinars in 2015. We are starting with Planning for 2015 in January. Do you want to be part of a Webinar group? Contact jflo@cordellparvin.com for the details.

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.