

The Importance of Practicing With Young Lawyers

It is hard to argue with the adage that there is no substitute for years of practical experience, and this is true whether one is talking about the practice of law or countless other things. However, while experienced practitioners no doubt bring countless benefits to the firms they associate themselves with, it is important not to overlook the numerous benefits being associated with younger practitioners bring.

First and perhaps foremost, young lawyers generally bring with them an understanding of the newest technology available to the practice and often possess a native understanding of that technology that makes them a resource to the management in firms looking to modernize or better maintain the information technology resources that are deployed to aid in the practice of law. This is certainly true in my firm. Though I am entrusted with primary responsibility over our firm's information technology resources, and like to think that I possess an above-average knowledge of all things related to technology in law, I regularly consult with several of my younger colleagues in the office when considering changes to the equipment and software we use. That kind of fresh perspective has often led me to consider other alternatives or ideas that I would not have realized on my own nor would have been called to my attention by some of the more experienced partners in my office.

Further, because most younger lawyers have recently been required to pass a bar exam in order to begin practicing, those lawyers possess a more well-rounded knowledge of numerous areas of substantive law than their more experienced counterparts due to the requirements of not only the bar exam, but also successfully graduating from law school itself. This broad base of knowledge clearly has benefits when approaching the analysis of new matters coming into an office, particularly those matters somewhat outside of a more experienced lawyer's regular

practice area. Similar to the benefits involving technology concerns, such a fresh perspective might lead a firm to be able to better research and analyze matters than might otherwise be possible.

The perspective that young lawyers bring to a firm just due to their involvement in matters outside of the office should not be discounted, either. Many of the lawyers that I serve with on the Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee are typical of most young lawyers around the state in this regard. Most are active members of their community who dedicate countless hours away from their office and families to worthy causes. Many have both spouses and young families that also require their time and attention. Their ability to balance a busy professional life with those outside influences and interests yields benefits to their firms, including being able to assist in structuring the office environment that most efficiently deploys and harnesses their talents, opening new avenues of revenue generation for the firm, to any number of other ways. It is a subset of attorneys that should not be discounted or overlooked when structuring a firm or a practice.

Because this is my final column as the Chair of the Young Lawyer Section, I would like to say thank you to my wife, Jodie, a busy practitioner herself, for her patience during my year as Chairperson. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Phillips, Gardill, Kaiser & Altmeyer for the help that they provided in allowing me to serve along with their understanding on the time required away from the office. Getting to know and work with the many lawyers around the State who have served with me on both the Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee and the Board of Governors, as well as the professionals at the State Bar who provide an invaluable amount of assistance to those two groups, has truly been a pleasure and a worthwhile experience that I will not forget.