

Your Seat at the Table: Leveraging Your Personal Brand to Amplify Your Leadership and Career

## Career Advice for Fellow Legal Marketers

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Life is long, don't burn bridges.

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Always negotiate your start date for a new role in such a way that you can give a full two weeks' notice (as well as a few days off to decompress between jobs). The new employer can wait a few days but not giving a full two weeks can damage your relationship with a person you might need later for a reference.

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Make a habit of updating your list of achievements on a rolling basis so you have a comprehensive list for your annual review. Use those accomplishments to update your resume regularly so that it's always ready to send along should an amazing opportunity present itself.

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Be open to differing opinions and treat everyone with grace and kindness, including yourself!

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We should all try to remember that we are all in the people business. One never knows who might be a source of business, or helpful or useful in the future. We are all brand and firm ambassadors, and how we treat other people is a direct reflection on our firm's and ourselves.

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Pick your battles carefully.

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No one will ever reward you for not taking vacations or using your sick days.

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You need to be your own marketer. No one is going to notice you did a good job, you need to market that.

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Look outside of the industry for best practices, triangulating back to what works in legal. There are a lot of great ideas and channels in consumer marketing that can inspire new approaches.

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Don't minimize what we do by saying things like this isn't rocket science. If everybody could do it well, they would. In this industry, they will try, but know that what you do is special and unique. By all means, collaborate and be open to new ideas, but don't fall into the trap of implying in any way that you are disposable.

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Learn as much as you can about other departments and how they relate to the client experience.

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Urgency often masquerades as importance in our world. If you receive a pressing request, ask yourself if it is both urgent *and* important. And remember, unless you are truly curing cancer, it can wait.

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Enjoy the moment you are in and the people you are with. Don't get so worked up about the small stuff. It will be forgotten within a matter of days.

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Change is constantly occurring. Embrace it and choose a path that works for you with a look to the future.

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Slow down and enjoy the projects, experiences and lessons learned along the way.

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Never stop learning, the world is changing too fast to assume what we learned yesterday is still true.

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Tend to your network throughout your career, not just when you need something. This includes mentoring, being a knowledge resource for both juniors and peers, and volunteering with associations like LMA and ILTA.

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You are *not* replaceable. And you're worth more than they think.

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Network like one day you will own your own business, even if it seems like the farthest thing possible. Your ability to network, build relationships and become a thought leader is more valuable than your ability to save money in your emergency fund. Invest in it. One day you'll be grateful you did.

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Network and freely share your experience, there is room in the sky for all of us to shine. Network with those outside the legal industry.

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Don't be afraid to take a left turn — or two. The path is not always straight.

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Remember that you are the owner of your career. Know your value and worth. Be open to opportunities. Build a large, diverse network.

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Family first, career second.

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Don't let fear rule your decision-making.

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Keep your personal identity separate from your work identity.

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Reinvent your work as you go along.

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Take note of the skills you have that you love to use, are good at *and* are valuable in your current/future workplaces.

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Use that skill as many minutes per day/week as you can. I found that makes me happy and I feel useful and powerful.

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How? Notice which skills let you feel more like yourself or in the zone.

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Find passion in what you do and the "why" behind working in your current position.

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Everyone in this industry will have opinions. Some aggressively so. Take it all in stride, and don't let yourself get baited. The biggest critics are living in a place of scarcity and resentment. Don't let them take your shine.

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Depending on what stage you are in your career, a lateral move may be more critical to your development than moving up. For example, if you have a goal of becoming the head of a marketing and business development (BD) team, but all your experience is on the marketing side, raise your hand for a similar level BD role, or even raise your hand to take on BD responsibilities for a specific practice/group so you can build those skills.

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Continuous focus on organizational skills and process improvement will pay dividends as you continue to move up in your career.

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Learn as much as you can about the business of law within your firm and from outside your firm.

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If actively pursuing a position, customize your resume for the role you are pursuing. With online portals, hiring managers are inundated with resumes, every effort you make to stand out will help get your resume to the top of the pile. And, have several people you trust proofread/give feedback on your resume. I'm always surprised by the prevalence of typos in resumes!

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Identify a mentor (formal or informal) at work. They can help you grow and think about your role in different ways. They don't have to be in the same department as you but regularly check in with them for support, inspiration and friendship.

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If there's a position you aspire to, reach out to the people in those roles to ask how they got to where they are. This can help identify areas that need cultivating and remind you that everyone's path is different.

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This may be a lost art, but I still believe thoughtful cover letters can set you apart in the application process. Especially if your experience or current job title doesn't outwardly appear to match. Don't forget a follow-up email/note — those are always appreciated and can also set you apart from the crowd.

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Always try to make your bosses' lives a little bit easier — just as we coach our lawyers to do for their clients, we can do the same within our own teams. Growth is a two-way street.

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Own the creation of your own career path — lean on your champions and your personal board of advisors to identify what you love to do most and then carve out a place in the business to leverage that.

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Never be too good to do what needs to be done — know enough about everything to be dangerous, but also let the experts be experts.

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Aim not to be the smartest person in the room, but instead to have the confidence to enter rooms full of smart people and learn from them.

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Do the things that scare you more often than the things that come naturally. They will become the things that come naturally.

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Find your sweet spot and focus on it. You can't be good at everything, but if you do what you're good at, you'll thrive. Try to work for and with good people. Life is too short to stay in toxic environments. This industry is full of amazing and generous people. Try to be near them.

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You are not defined by your job title.

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Always trust your gut.

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Your work is not your family so be careful what you share — you can and will be replaced.

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If you don't market yourself, no one else will. Visibility both internally and externally is your responsibility.

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If you believe in yourself, you can do anything.

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Raise your hand (or ask) whenever you don't understand a concept, acronym or initialism.

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If you try to do the right things, often (not always), you will be a pariah.

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Protect yourself: Know your goals and don't tolerate BS. Be true to your vision and trust your gut. Look outside the profession for great ideas and inspiration. This is an insular profession — that's why it hasn't changed much in 30 years. Your best friends aren't inside the profession — they're how you connect outside of it.

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Always be curious — practice the skills of active listening and asking powerful questions. Take a “coach approach” in work and life and your relationships will flourish. I wish I'd learned to listen much earlier in my personal and professional life.

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Get lucky by working for a prescient, supportive optimistic firm chairman who asks you to challenge everyone to find a better way. His career advice to me: “Every day, do your job like you're not afraid to lose your job!”

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If no one is complaining, you're not doing your job. You need to be pushing the attorneys outside their comfort zones. That means you might ruffle a couple feathers.

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Be careful with reply all and email attachments!

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## Advice from Outside Legal

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Don't stay in a place longer than you should out of loyalty to the folks there, especially if you have a growth opportunity elsewhere.

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Take more risks.

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Lean in.

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Nurture relationships and skills outside of your career/day job, because that's what will enrich your life and sustain you going forward.

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Embrace change and trust the process.

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Call BS when you see it.

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Be a mentor.

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Do something that makes you happy every day.

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Sometimes the pay cut is worth the mental health gain.

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Set boundaries and stick to them.

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Have the wisdom to know that when something fails don't dwell too much on it. Move on. Quit looking for success where there is none. Failure is on the same road as success.

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They are your coworkers; they are not your friends.

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Live your bliss.

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