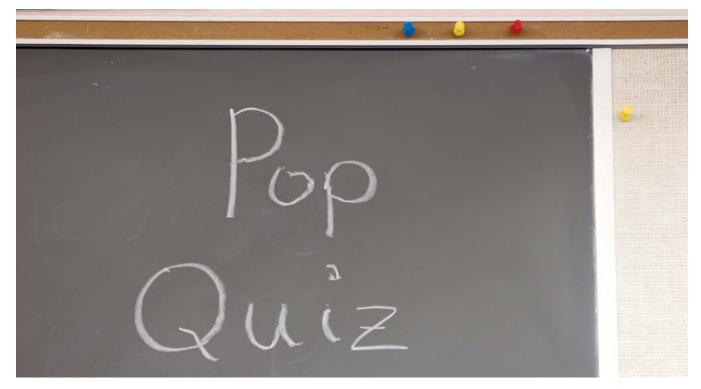
LAW PRACTICE

BY VICTOR M. METSCH



Are You a "Good" Partner?

ou're a partner in a law firm – large or small - and at the end of the day, you satisfy your clients' needs and do enough business to practice comfortably. You're meeting your goals - but are you a good partner? And how do we define that term? Is it like being a good roommate? A good parent? Teacher? Student? Partnership requires a synthesis of all of these roles, among countless others.

Evaluating your performance as a partner goes well beyond billings and bringing in new business. Ask yourself the following questions and see how "good" you really are.

Are You an Effective Leader?

- 1. Do you lead or simply manage?
- Are you proactive or simply reactive?
- Do you avoid waste and redundancy? 3.
- Do you share credit when things go right?

Are You a Team Player?

- Do you prioritize work for associates?
- Do you ask associates about work/deadlines for others when giving them assignments?
- Do you coordinate assignments for associates with your partners?
- Do you proactively mentor (or just judge and criticize) associates?

- 5. Do you review all substantive work by associates before it goes out or is filed?
- 6. Do you give associates time budgets and deadlines on work?
- Do you give associates prompt feedback on their work product?
- Do you treat your partners as equals?
- Do you treat your partners with respect?
- 10. Do you help a partner who is "swamped"?
- 11. Do you assist a partner or associate who is having a family or personal problem?
- 12. Have you introduced your clients to other partners?

Does Your Staff Feel Appreciated?

- Do you treat your staff with respect?
- Do you give your staff work throughout the day so as to avoid day-end stress?
- Do you thank your staff for a special effort or a job well done?
- 4. Do you coordinate with colleagues with whom you share an assistant?
- 5. Does your assistant cover tasks for the firm to the same extent as others?

How Do You Handle Billing and New Business?

- Do you enter your time on a regular basis?
- Do you bill your clients at least once a month?

- 3. Do you follow up your accounts receivable once a
- 4. Do you address issues with clients who have ceased to be responsive to requests for payment?
- Do you do conflict searches on new clients/matters?
- 6. Do you get signed retainer agreements from new clients before commencing work?
- 7. Do you get advance/evergreen retainers on new clients/matters?
- 8. Do you get prior approval from management committee on all special fee arrangements?
- 9. Do you get a second opinion on contingent fee matters?
- 10. Do you get a second partner to review new litigation matters?
- 11. Do you avoid non-reimbursable expenses?
- 12. Do you have your clients pay large out-of-pocket expenses directly?
- 13. Do you routinely reduce time charges before you send out bills?
- 14. Do you routinely grant clients concessions on billed amounts?

Are You an Island?

- Do you think running the firm is someone else's job?
- Do you leave work to the last minute?
- Do you blame associates for your own failure to supervise?
- 4. Do you think you are the only partner who is working?
- Do you think that your work is the most important in the office?
- 6. Do you think that you are the only partner dealing with difficult clients or complex problems?
- 7. Do you think that you are the only partner who has to address emergencies?
- Do you think that you are the only partner with family/health/other issues?

Are you really a "good" partner?

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