

# Young Lawyers



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## THE THREE PILLARS OF A SUCCESSFUL LAW PRACTICE

A successful law practice consists of strong leadership, dedicated employees and a clear mission statement.

### Strong Leadership

A strong leader works with his or her employees to set realistic goals and shows appreciation by acknowledging those employees for a job well done. A good leader is passionate about the work he or she does and has a desire to give back to the community and the legal profession.

A good leader is able to manage a caseload while balancing client expectations, employees and fiscal responsibilities. Managing a caseload is critical to any successful law practice. Balancing client expectations is also extremely important and involves good communication skills. If you tell a client that you will have an answer to a question by a certain date, make sure you get a response to that client on or before that date. A good leader is well organized, prepared and knowledgeable about the fiscal responsibilities of an organization. Finally, a good leader emboldens his or her employees. Professor Becky Brodin said it best when she said, “[l]eadership is not [about] wielding authority—it is [about] empowering people.” By empowering people, a good leader can create a lasting legacy.

### Dedicated Employees

Any successful law practice is built around dedicated employees. It is no surprise that employees are what drive a business. This is why it is imperative for an organization to take good care of its employees. This can be accomplished by creating a positive work environment with open lines of communication. Validating your employees and being available to answer their questions and/or address their concerns is critical to running a successful law practice. Employees who feel respected, appreciated and validated will work harder to make the practice a success than those who feel that their hard work is not being recognized. It goes without saying, but these principles should extend not just to attorneys, but also to support staff, runners and investigators as well. Allowing your employees to take time off of work for self-care in order to avoid physical or mental burnout is also important. The practice of law is often stressful, but as entrepreneur and hotelier J.W. Marriott once stated, “[i]f you take care of your employees, they will take care of your customers, and your business will take care of itself.” It is that simple.

### A Clear Mission Statement

Any successful law practice has a clear mission statement. A mission statement defines the organization’s business and its objectives, and defines its approach to reaching those objectives. For example, the mission of the Washoe County Public Defender’s Office is “to protect and defend the rights of indigent people in Washoe County by providing them with access to justice through professional legal representation.” That mission statement is clear and concise, and serves as the foundation for the purpose of the Washoe County Public Defender’s Office.

In closing, for any business to truly thrive, it must have strong leadership, dedicated employees and a clear mission statement. These things are the support pillars of a successful law practice. Aside from those three pillars, an organization should also have a vision that looks beyond the day-to-day, toward the future and to where the practice is headed. **NL**