The Managing Partner Forum for Northeastern Law Firms

Results of Audience Participation Session
November 4, 2010 – Boston, Massachusetts
Who do you think will win Super Bowl XLV?

1. New England Patriots
2. New York Jets
3. Pittsburgh Steelers
4. Indianapolis Colts
5. Baltimore Ravens
6. Some team from the woeful NFC will get lucky

58%

Q: 1
What is the total number of lawyers at your firm?

1. Less than 20
2. 20-50 lawyers
3. 51-100 lawyers
4. More than 100 lawyers

Q: 2
How long have you been your firm's managing partner?

1. Less than two years
2. 2-5 years
3. 6-10 years
4. More than 10 years
How has your firm performed so far in 2010?

1. Much better than expected. We’re having a good year.
2. About what we expected. A relatively good year.
3. OK, but not where we want to be.
Looking ahead, how would you describe your expectations for 2011?

1. 2011 will be a very good year… a solid improvement from 2010.
2. Cautiously optimistic. We expect a slight improvement, but still nervous about the economy.
3. Hard to say. Fairly flat.
4. We see another difficult year in 2011. Profits will remain disappointing.
What have been your firm’s most effective strategies to improve financial performance over the past 2 or 3 years?

- Marketing and business development: 6.25
- Improved billing/collection: 5.46
- Improved operating efficiencies: 4.58
- Increased hourly rates: 3.79
- Reducing staff headcount: 2.63
- Strategic planning and implementation: 1.75
- Dealing with underperforming equity partners: 1.08
- Across the board cuts in operating expenses: 0.75
- Reducing associates and paralegals: 0.00
- Other: 0.00

Q: 6
How many billable hours (average) do you anticipate from your partners in 2010?

1. Less than 1,500
2. 1,500 – 1,699
3. 1,700 – 1,899
4. 1,900 – 2,100
5. More than 2,100
How many billable hours (average) do you anticipate from your associates in 2010?

1. Less than 1,500
2. 1,500 – 1,699
3. 1,700 – 1,899
4. 1,900 – 2,100
5. More than 2,100

Q: 8
Does your firm offer alternative fee arrangements to its clients?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Work in progress

Q: 9
Which term most closely describes your firm’s system of governance?

1. Very democratic  57%
2. Somewhat democratic  22%
3. Oligopoly  13%
4. Benevolent dictatorship  9%
5. Tyranny  0%
Does your firm have a multi-tiered partnership structure?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Work in progress

Q: 11
Which terms most closely describe your firm’s compensation system?

1. Strictly formula driven – we look only at the numbers and each partner’s contribution to the bottom line
2. Mostly formula driven – we look at the numbers, but factor non-billable contributions
3. Mostly subjective – we look at numbers but give significant weight to subjective and non-billable contributions

Q: 12
Does your firm have a written strategic plan?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Work in progress

25% 50% 25%

Q: 13
What percentage of your time do you spend in your role as managing partner?

1. Less than 10%
2. 10-25%
3. 26-50%
4. More than 50%
5. Full-time

Q: 17
What do you feel are your most important contributions in your role as managing partner?

- Building consensus: 7.33
- Initiating changes: 6.46
- Day-to-day admin. affairs: 6.17
- Maximizing partner income: 2.08
- Long-term strategic issues: 1.75
- Maximizing my collections: 0.00

Q: 18
By contrast, where do you spend most of your time?

- Day-to-day admin. affairs: 8.92
- Building consensus: 8.00
- Initiating changes: 6.21
- Long-term strategic issues: 1.00
- Maximizing partner income: 0.75
- Maximizing my collections: 0.67

Q: 19
Does your firm have a formal job description for the managing partner?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Work in progress

Q: 20
How are you compensated for your contributions as managing partner?

1. Fixed amount based on time required
2. Compensation based on firm performance
3. Combination of fixed amount, plus bonus based on firm performance
4. Reduction in billable hour requirements
5. No direct reward associated with the position
6. Other

Q: 21
Have you established a clearly defined “exit strategy” with your partners?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Sorta Kinda

Q: 22
What do you plan to do when you step down as managing partner?

1. Go back to practicing law on a full-time basis
2. Take on a reduced work load, perhaps an “Of Counsel” role
3. Go in-house
4. Retire from practice of law
5. I have no idea

Q: 23