

Stemming the Exodus of Women from the Profession: A Roadmap for Bar Associations

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Representation of Women

- Women represent 40 - 50% of law school classes for 25 years
- Women represent only 15% of law firm equity partners
 - 25% of non-equity partners; 34% of counsel; 44% of associates
- Women are 18% top legal officers of Fortune 500 Companies
- Women of color – 1.9% of equity & non-equity partners



Women Who Leave

- 31% of women lawyers leave, here's why:
 - Felt stalled in their career
 - Their career was not satisfying or enjoyable
 - Wanting to spend more time with their kids
 - Their spouse/partner's income was sufficient
 - They needed more time with parents or other family
- Of the women law firm lawyers who leave:
 - 37% go in-house
 - 9% go to government
 - 8% go to non-profits
 - 24% work as non-lawyers
 - 22% are unemployed



It's Not Just Women

Gen Y (80 million born 1980–2000)

- Different expectations in how they will work
- Male & female students' #1 concern – work/life balance
- 8 out of 10 law students would trade \$ for time
- Seeking flexibility, meaning, community, feedback, mentoring



Impact of Women's Departure on the Bar

- An ineffective model
- Lack of diversity in the profession
- Narrow outlook on view & use of talent pool
- With increased dual career households, it is impacting most practicing lawyers



Solutions for Women

- Solutions for Women Involve Two Aspects:
 1. Women's Individual Action Steps
 2. Structural Change to Employers
- Five Areas of Focus:
 1. Development & Promotion
 2. Mentoring & Sponsorship
 3. Leadership
 4. Networking & Business Development
 5. Flexibility & Work/Life Balance



Designing a Woman-Friendly Employer

- Representation
- Parental Leave
- Childcare
- Flexibility
 - Alternative work arrangements
 - Phase back & Reentry
 - Billable Hours
 - Vacation
- Leadership, Compensation & Advancement
 - Leadership on committees & in departments
- Development & Retention
 - Mentoring; Sponsorship
 - Women's initiatives
 - Training
 - Diversity & Accountability



Women's Leadership Target

- Critical mass is needed for women's leadership
 - 1 woman – tokenism
 - 2 women – conspiracy
- 30% equity partners, chief legal officers & tenured faculty
 - 2006 NAWL target
- HBR 2006 – Clear shift when boards have 3 or more women
 - Women broaden discussions, represent wider set of stakeholders
 - Women can be more dogged than men in pursuing answers
 - Women bring collaboration to leadership, improving communication

Benchmarks – Where are some

- Representation – 19% female equity partners (BLF, 2011)
- Leadership – Influential committees (BLF, 2011)
 - Executive / Management – 19%
 - Compensation – 18%
 - Chairpersons – 10%; Managing Partners – 12%
- Compensation among 200 large law firms (NAWL, 2011)
 - Female equity partners earned 86% of male equity partners
 - Female non-equity partners earned 95% of male non-equity partners
 - Female counsel earned 92% of male counsel
- Lawyers working part-time
 - Nationally, 6% (NALP, 2011)
 - Best Law Firms for Women, 10% (BLF, 2011)



Designing a Work/Life Friendly Employer

- Work/life Balance for all lawyers during span of their careers
- Reasonable hours for all lawyers
- Protecting vacation
- Supporting parental & other leaves
 - Look at offerings & usage rates
 - Instituting “phase back” from parental leave
- Childcare and eldercare offerings & support
- Flexible & reduced hours
- Implementing successful re-entry policies
- Phased retirement program



What Bar Associations Can Do

- Educate to inform & avoid stereotyping
- Offer programming
 - Getting lawyers back to work
 - Starting your own law firm
 - Panels of employers sharing best practices & policies
- Host networking events
- Create a Lawyers in Transition committee
 - Programming
 - Website resources of events, articles, etc.
 - Creating a network & community for lawyers in transition
- Provide discounts on bar membership & CLEs for unemployed lawyers





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Author of *LAW & REORDER*:

***Legal Industry Solutions for Restructure, Retention,
Promotion & Work/Life Balance (ABA, 2010)***