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## MILLENNIALS: TIPS FOR BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

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By Lauren Stiller Rikleen

*It is critical that young lawyers understand early in their careers the relationship between their future success in the profession and their ability to attract and retain clients.*

Young lawyers entering the profession today are facing a vastly different workplace than their predecessor generations did. When the baby boomers entered the legal profession, a firm could be considered large if it had more than 100 lawyers. Today, global mega-firms predominate the legal landscape. And where once a summer associate class might consist of a dozen young law students, today's summer classes are larger than many law firms.

Moreover, the pace of law practice today is faster and more stressful than ever before. Technology has made lawyers accessible around the clock, forever altering the rhythm of law practice and allowing firms to impose extraordinary demands on the lives of their young lawyers. Even as the physical and emotional burdens of these demands have yet to be fully understood, the current pace also leaves little time for reflective thinking about one's future career.

But it is exactly that type of reflective thinking that young lawyers must do to understand the relationship between future success in the profession and the ability to attract and retain clients. In the highly competitive legal market that exists today, a young lawyer can no longer assume an

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opportunity to learn and grow at the arm of a senior mentor. Young lawyers need to be savvy as they navigate their careers in a vastly changing environment.

Here are five recommendations for building the foundation of your business development success.

1. **STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE.** Be sure to follow the first piece of business development advice all young lawyers receive: Be an excellent lawyer. That is one old-fashioned recommendation that will never be outdated. No matter how charismatic you are, or how vast your network may be, true success in the legal profession starts with excellence in your craftsmanship.

2. **LEARN FROM THE SUCCESSES AND THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS.** Today's billing pressures have diminished the opportunities to shadow senior lawyers by attending depositions and court hearings. Moreover, clients will not pay the high rates for multiple lawyers to attend a meeting or hearing, and law firms do not encourage young lawyers to observe more experienced lawyers at their work when the time cannot be billed. Nonetheless, there are few better teaching moments than observing a lawyer at trial or negotiating a deal. Look for those opportunities, even if it means making up the time.

3. **MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND KEEP THE OLD.** Effective business development is really all about relationships. Classmates from law school go on to become clients and sources of referral business. The same is true of your colleagues at work and other friends in the legal profession. Maintain these relationships throughout your career.

4. **HELP OTHERS.** The simple fact is that effective networking means thinking about ways you can help your classmates, your colleagues and your friends meet their own career goals. Be generous with your own relationships and contacts, and you will build a large reservoir of goodwill for when you need help.

5. **WORK WITH ENTHUSIASM.** Enthusiasm for one's work is infectious. People enjoy being around those who love what they do. Enjoy your work and share that enthusiasm in a way that lets others know that you are the perfect person to handle their future matters.

**Lauren Stiller Rikleen**  
**President, Rikleen Institute for Strategic Leadership**  
[www.RikleenInstitute.com](http://www.RikleenInstitute.com)

**Executive-in-Residence**  
**Boston College Center for Work and Family**  
**22 Stone Avenue**  
**Chestnut Hill, MA 02467**  
**617.552.8931**  
**LaurenR@bc.edu**  
[www.bc.edu/cwf](http://www.bc.edu/cwf)