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HOW TO STAND OUT AND GET ON THE PARTNERSHIP TRACK

By Sarah Kellogg



Courtesy of Troutman Sanders LLP

TODD R. COLES

Troutman Sanders LLP

The starting point is professional excellence. All our partner candidates are outstanding attorneys in their chosen area of expertise . . . We look for associates to distinguish themselves substantively from a professional excellence perspective. The next factor is financial metrics. That becomes an increasingly important role as associates become more senior . . . Partner candidates must have a strong financial profile. The third category is business development. We are looking for senior associates . . . to reflect a commitment and aptitude for business development. Finally, we expect partner candidates to demonstrate an ownership mentality. That can be manifested in any number of ways that shows an all-in commitment to the firm and clients.



Courtesy of Gibson Dunn LLP

STACIE B. FLETCHER

Gibson Dunn LLP

A successful associate is not merely waiting on the next assignment, but rather can look beyond the boundaries of a particular legal issue and help shape [the] next steps for the overall matter or client. Likewise, a successful associate can demonstrate leadership by proactively identifying and suggesting opportunities for skills development, marketing, and pro bono — as opposed to sitting back and waiting for those opportunities to present themselves. Associates at all levels can distinguish themselves by demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit. For senior associates, this means identifying external opportunities and forging meaningful relationships with clients . . . The best learning experiences do not always come at the perfect time or under perfect circumstances.



Courtesy of Price Benowitz LLP

SETH PRICE

Price Benowitz LLP

I don't like the term "associate" in the sense that it designates the person as less than. We have an emphasis here on business development and developing client relationships at every level. If you want people to bring in work to advance the business, why would you label them as second tier? Even if someone is junior, we would never use a term that is going to lessen them. . . . We focus on incentivizing people for what they do. Bringing in new clients is important. I'm always amazed at firms that don't incentivize people who bring in work. . . . If we can incentivize partners and associates, that's the best scenario to encourage partnership skills.

Sarah Kellogg is a regular contributor to Washington Lawyer.