

5 Career Resolutions for 2013

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A brand new year offers you a fresh start and an opportunity to improve your life. While you are busy setting resolutions for your personal life, don't forget to assess and revamp your professional life as well. Below are my top five career resolutions to help you achieve your career goals.

1. Improve Your Business Development Skills

Gone are the days of the service partner and the associate who sits in his or her office cranking out brief after brief or document after document. Law firms are looking for partners who can support themselves and bring revenue to the firm. If you are a junior associate you may think you have several years before you have to bring clients to the firm. The truth is, you need to start developing your networks now and solidifying relationships that can and will lead to business down the road. This is the single most important skill to have as a lawyer in today's legal market. Study the rainmakers at your firm and take notes - what makes them successful at bringing in business?

2. Get Out of the Office and Network

Networking is important for your career in many ways. It's crucial for developing business but can also open doors for you career wise, both in the near term or long term. Good networking opportunities include law school or undergraduate alumni events, industry events and conferences or even the popular happy hour spot down the block from your office. When networking with people, think not just about how they can help you but how you can help them - is there a helpful introduction you could make or someone else in your network who would have an interest in meeting this person? Helping others leverage your network is important for creating meaningful relationships.

3. Set Career Goals

Each year, it's important to take some time away from the daily demands of your job and reflect on what your career goals are for one, three and five years from now. Do you want to make partner? Go in-house? Start your own firm? What do you need to do to accomplish those goals in the timeframe you set forth for them? If you don't take some time to determine what you want to achieve and when you want to achieve it, no one's going to do it for you. In addition, this goal-setting process will help elucidate the kind of people you should be reaching out to in your networking efforts.

4. Keep your Eye on the Job Market

There's no downside to keeping track of what's going on in the job market. You'll often find that the best opportunities come along when you least expect them or want to make a move. You'll also find that it's always easier to find a new job when you already have one that you like or are comfortable in, even if it's just for now. What's the best way to do this? It doesn't hurt to keep an eye on legal job boards, but probably the most important thing you should do is establish a relationship with a recruiter you trust who can keep you posted on opportunities.

5. Make Time for Yourself

While it's always easier said than done, take some time just for yourself. Take a vacation, go out with friends,

hang out with your family, do whatever it is that helps you relax and take your mind off work. The legal industry is a demanding one, and without a break from work from time to time, you'll soon find yourself burnt out and questioning if you'll ever (or even want to) achieve the goals your set out for yourself.