

# TAKE CONTROL!

## Career Planning for Junior Associates

**S**elf-assessment and knowing what you truly want to do are key to planning your career. This was the theme of the October 25 program, "Take Control! Career Planning for Junior Associates". Sponsored by the Career Advancement and Management Committee (chaired by Tanya Gill), the program offered attendees self-assessment and career planning tools that they could use to construct their own career plan. The program was moderated by Kathy Brady of Brady & Associates Career Planners, and the panelists were Jason M. Ban, Chief Compliance Officer/Associate Counsel, Laurus Capital Management, LLC; Jeffrey A. Brandon, Director, Waller Capital Corporation; Alan D. Surchin, Pittleman & Associates and Julia Herr Smith, President, Esquire Prep, LLC. The panelists presented their experiences, and Ms. Brady drew upon the discussion and offered advice, which we've summarized below.

### **Take the Time to Sit and Think**

The first thing to do is to take the time to think. Think about your work and your life. Think about how you want to live your life. Then think about the end, where do you want to be? Most people say what they want in their career is success. Success is about being content in your life. But the definition of success is different for all of us. For some, it means achieving measurable goals, like buying a house or having children. For others, it means having a positive impact on other people, family, colleagues or the world around you. For still others, success can mean leaving a legacy.

Whatever your definition of success, the harder question is how do you get there? Take the time to draft written goals. Nothing fancy; just jot down fifteen things that you would like to make

sure you accomplish. Then think about what three you might be able to accomplish in the next five years, and about what one thing on your list you would be able to accomplish this year. Take little steps toward the end. Once you map it out into small steps the list does not seem that insurmountable.

It may feel funny or useless to actually write down your goals, but according to a recent study, those who said they have thought about their goals ended up earning twice as much as those who said they never thought about goals. And those with written goals earned ten times as much as those who had goals in mind.

Remember to look at your list at least once a year. As time goes by you will begin to realize the differences between goals and fantasies. That doesn't mean you should cross your fantasies off the list; just realize that they are fantasies and that maybe you will have time to work on them at another point in your life.

### **Abilities, Believe and Catalog**

Now that you have your list, it is time to think about planning your career. The first step is to think about your abilities. What is it that you can do and what do you know? Again, it is useful to write it all down. By writing everything down you may notice the abilities you have do not line up with what you want to do. So you will know to adjust your goals or your plan. Next, you must believe that it can happen.

Third, in order to succeed you need to believe in yourself and have passion about your career.

Finally, to meet your career goals you need to catalog. Always have a resume on your computer. Constantly update it. Add speaking engagements, written work and assignments. If you don't write it down now you may not remember

it later. Don't worry how long your resume gets. You can always pare it down later.

Keeping your resume updated and handy is important since you should always be involved in a passive job search. A passive job search means continually investigating the world of work. See what jobs are out there and what practice areas are hot. Plus, the best time to look is when you already have a job. This way you come from a position of strength. You just may find an opportunity out there that helps you achieve or move closer to one of the goals on your list.

### **Build Networks**

As has been said so many times, an important part of succeeding in a job, job search or your career is networking. Work on building external and internal networks. Don't just begin to network when you thinking about a job change. Build your networks now. Although you may not be looking to make a career change now, figure out how to connect to the people you know. Do favors for them and they will do the same for you when you do need the help.

Once you have decided it is time for you to call in the favors from your network, start by telling yourself, today I will make one networking call. By thinking about it like that you will make the situation more manageable and you will feel like you are moving ahead.

If you articulate your goals and priorities and work with passion and focus on your strengths, you can find what it is you like to do and put yourself in a position to attain the success you desire.