

From the Front Line — Perspectives on Leadership



by *Eva Wisnik*
and *Jennifer Johnson*



How would you describe your leadership style? Did you have leadership role models? What do law firms expect of their marketing leadership? Six leaders in law firm marketing, Wendy Loder Bernero, Yolanda Cartusciello, Bob Gero, Stephanie Goldstein, Liz R. Kalooky and Kim Perret, shared with us their responses to those questions. We hope their thoughts on leadership will help you improve your leadership skills.

Wendy Loder Bernero



Director of Practice Development
Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison LLP
Years of Marketing Experience: 15
Oversees Department of 10 Professionals

I would describe my leadership style as a “coach.” I try to give my people as much responsibility as they can handle and periodically check with them to see if they need tools or positive reinforcement. I encourage them to think creatively when they are solving problems. I see my role as one where I am the “translator” between our lawyers and my team members. I explain the “whys” behind the projects they are working on and provide constructive feedback they can learn from.

The best boss I ever had took the “daggers” but not the credit for his staff’s work. He had an open-door policy and was always there to give us perspective and feedback in a constructive manner. I felt accountable for the end product, but very supported.

They expect us to teach, lead and coach our team. They want us to create a work ethic in our department that is in sync with the firm’s culture. They expect us to communicate expectations to our staff so they understand what they need to do to get marketing results.

Yolanda Cartusciello



Director of Marketing
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP
Years of Marketing Experience: 5
Oversees Department of 19 Professionals

My leadership style is motivational. I have high expectations of my team members and encourage them to rise to the occasion.

Early in my career, I worked for a great partner who had unwavering belief and confidence in my abilities. This person gave me the latitude to grow and encouraged me to “figure it out.”

They expect me to provide not only the vision and strategy but also the road map for tactical implementation. There is an underlying expectation that we understand them, what they do and the challenges they deal with daily. To establish credibility with

your lawyers, you should be intimately familiar with what they do for a living and understand what their clients do. Using the same vocabulary has helped get the buy-in necessary to move marketing initiatives forward.

Bob Gero



Chief Marketing Officer
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman
Years of Marketing Experience: 25
Oversees Department of 14 Professionals

My role is strategic management of the team. I advocate for my staff to ensure that they have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs, as well as help them work together most effectively. I am responsible for delivering effective communication and business-development processes. On a day-to-day basis, I need to manage the department with the mutual goal of meeting our clients' needs and supporting the professional development of my staff. I would describe my leadership style as one that encourages constant improvement.

I had a mentor who gave me a great deal of responsibility. He clearly communicated those responsibilities without micro-managing me. He let me decide how I was going to accomplish the task and was there to review the project with me face-to-face. He was there for feedback and encouragement but let me make the necessary corrections. That's how I like to see my role with my staff. I'm here to encourage a proper solution and I'm here to support them.

They expect a professional approach to business development and marketing communication. They want us to guide the staff and spend the firm's resources in a way that adds value. To succeed in this field, you need to have thick skin, welcome feedback and be willing to learn all the time.

Stephanie Goldstein



Chief Marketing Officer
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
Years of Marketing Experience: 10
Oversees Department of 34 Professionals

I would describe my leadership style as one that is fair, positive and open-minded. I am committed to building leaders within our department. I expect that each team member will take responsibility for and pride in their work. Creating growth opportunities for team members so that they have the chance to "step out of their comfort zone" keeps the work we do fresh, interesting, challenging and fun.

On a professional level, the best role models are those whose levels of energy and enthusiasm are infectious! My first boss out of college really made me feel like the sky was the limit and that I could do anything. My predecessor, Silvia Coulter, always empowered and inspired her staff. On a personal level, my parents provided me with incredible opportunities that helped me grow into a confident, dedicated and hard-working professional.

Quality, quality, quality. Firm management expects that we will develop and produce outstanding marketing initiatives and results. Marketing leaders must be able to work with a variety of personalities, have a sense of humor, be flexible and anticipate needs and manage expectations.

Liz R. Kalooky



Director of Business Development
Kennedy Covington Lobdell & Hickman, L.L.P.
Years of Marketing Experience: 12
Oversees Department of 5 Professionals

I would describe my role as strategic. That is, I "place my bets." I know I can't do everything, so I focus each year on five major initiatives that will have the greatest marketing results for the firm. By tracking our progress and sharing our large "successes" with others in the firm, I can get our lawyers excited about marketing initiatives.

My father has been my greatest leadership role model. Over 30 years, he built a career as a leader in regional planning for a major metropolitan city by developing relationships, being on top of his game by absorbing as much knowledge as he could about key issues and understanding and strategically navigating the dynamics of a complex political organization.

They expect me to be a strategic thinker who is also willing to roll up my sleeves and make things happen. Another important part of my role is to make business development easier for my attorneys so they can focus on delivering great client service.

Kim Perret



Chief Marketing Officer
Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP
Years of Marketing Experience: 15
Oversees Department of 20 Professionals

I would describe my leadership style as inclusive and decisive. I welcome and encourage my staff's input on projects but will factor in my experience and knowledge of our firm culture and tolerance levels in making decisions.

I have learned a great deal from mentors who are leaders in LMA like Clara Boza, Norm Rubenstein and Bill Flannery. In addition, I had an executive director who was a great role model. She pushed me off the diving board and encouraged me to take on new challenges but was also very supportive.

My managing partner and firm leadership expect me to be thoughtful and creative and to exercise good judgment. They expect me to draw on my experience and use the tools we need for successful marketing efforts. Eighteen months ago, we rolled out a practice group business-development initiative that supports the firm's overall goals. We began with a pilot program in one practice group that was very successful. We have rolled out the practice group business-development initiative firm-wide, and now each practice group has a focused plan in place. Our lawyers are committed and actively participating. We knew we were doing a great job supporting their efforts when one of our lawyers recently said, "You nag me more than my wife" — and he was smiling.

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