## **Practice Success 101**

by Pete Roberts

he spring joint meeting of the ABA's Young Lawyers Division and Law Practice Management Section, held in New Orleans, was a huge success! Your obedient servant (me) was on hand to moderate a panel concerning how best to succeed as an associate. Herewith I include some of the tips generated:

- Create a business plan: address practice area, location, client base, budget, technology, etc.
- Make bank deposits yourself and get to know the bank staff; this is part of your growing network of referrals.
- Record time on a daily basis; use a spreadsheet to enable you to sort the entries by client and by day.
- Accept credit cards for fees.
- Always carry business cards.
- Listen to and learn from your staff.
- Get to know the other lawyers in your office.
- Be responsive to e-mail and phone messages; if busy, say so, and commit to a further response later.
- Learn the economics of your firm:

- the flow of work performed, billed, collected, written off; overhead; and partner compensation formula.
- Become an expert in a narrow area; it shows enthusiasm.
- Take initiative by anticipating questions and having the answers.
- Learn about the clients' businesses and industries.
- Be as organized as possible.
- Seek mentors at every opportunity.
- Learn basic supervision; praise publicly and counsel privately; avoid casting blame.
- Continuously develop your writing and speaking skills.
- Exercise judgment; spot blind alleys.
- Inquire about your performance; ask for feedback about assignments.
- Build good working relationships.
- Read Accounting for Dummies.
- Use available technology to the fullest.
- Be conscious of your role on the team; foster team-building.
- Avoid working behind a closed door; when it is necessary, explain to the staff why.

- Be clear: define the task; state the deadline; describe the methods/ resources.
- Know your stress and manage it.

At the WSBA Law Office Management Assistance Program (LOMAP), we can assist you with questions that may arise as you consider these tips. We look forward to hearing from you.  $\Diamond$ 

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