

Managing Our Firm, One Lawyer at a Time

By Gerry Riskin

A Presentation to a Firm

You are great lawyers. In order to be so, you must have a number of propensities: to be ferociously independent, critical and analytical and even tense sometimes. I will not ask you to give up those propensities in the context of your substantive practice.

Because we are now a firm of some size we need to capitalize upon the things we can achieve together that we cannot achieve alone. The rewards for doing so will be to gain competitive advantage. The punishment for not doing so will be to fade into mediocrity, perhaps even oblivion.

Therefore, the behavioral propensities you bring to your substantive work should continue but I am asking that you change your interactions with the firm in relation to its management. We cannot afford to debate every paper clip any longer.

If John F. Kennedy were a Managing Partner, he might have said, "Ask not what your firm can do for you but what you can do for your firm."

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