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HOW SUCCESSFUL FIRMS IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Most experts on the legal profession currently agree that there is still a shortage of legal work and an over-supply of lawyers. But they also report that overall revenue grew in 2014. There are several reasons for these conflicting reports. One of them is that many of the firms that are doing well have not only developed well thought-out strategies but have also implemented them.

The firms that have successfully implemented their strategies, even when they've had an adverse affect on some of their partners, generally have followed one of two approaches.

The first is a full-speed ahead, damn-the-torpedoes approach in which firm management just drives implementation forward. The firms that succeed with this approach realize that most of their partners don't particularly care what management does as long as it does not affect their own practice or work life. Most management theorists decry this approach as imperialistic. However, it generally works well when there is a new managing partner or a strong management group.

The other approach is more political and generally takes longer. While the strategies are extremely specific and detailed with regard to action steps, responsible parties and target dates, the greatest difference in this approach is that the goals are incremental and limited. As they are successfully implemented, new goals are developed.

Regardless of which approach a firm takes to implementation, the leaders are granted "nagging rights" by either firm culture or personal approval to remind, encourage and even badger the rest of the firm to move forward.

Lawyers don't like change but implementing strategies involves change and here is the important point: ***Change doesn't always result in improvement but improvement rarely comes without change.***

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Coming next month: Our Midyear Update on "What's Hot and What's Not in the Legal Profession"

Robert Denney Associates provides management, marketing and strategic planning guidance to law firms and businesses throughout the United States and parts of Canada. Reports and discussions of timely issues, as well as recent Legal and Corporate Communiques, are posted on our web site, www.robertdenney.com.

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