

Effective ways to lead and manage your team

"People ask the difference between a leader and a boss. The leader leads, and the boss drives."

— Theodore Roosevelt

By Christopher F. Earley



Running and managing a law firm is hard. Issues and challenges are constantly arising. I have found, though, that the more effectively I lead and manage my

team, the easier and less stressful owning a law firm becomes.

Here are some ways I have found to be particularly useful when it comes to managing my team members so that, as a team, we all thrive together.

Key performance indicators (KPIs). That which gets measured gets done. Each team member must have metrics they need to reach. At my office, these KPIs are the scoreboard that holds everyone accountable. Because I run a personal injury firm, the monthly numbers I primarily focus on are the number of signed intakes, demand packages sent out, and cases settled. Each department in our office has its own KPIs to reach. KPIs allow team members to track their individual progress in order to ensure we are on track to reach our monthly, quarterly and annual goals.

Weekly meetings. We have a weekly meeting on Fridays that is a great opportunity to discuss what we are doing right and where we can improve as a team. I lead them, but really I am just facilitating the discussion and looking for new ideas that the weekly meeting always spawns. At these meetings, which are sit-down and last roughly 30 minutes, you learn so much from your team. We have a POPS (problems and opportunities) list each week that we discuss as a team, which ensures we are all rowing in the same direction toward our KPIs.

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Shout-outs. I am a big believer in the concept of "catching someone doing something good," which I learned in the must-read book "The Two Minute Manager" by Tim Blanchard. When a team member has a "win," I believe that person should be praised. Not only is it the right thing to do, it shows the team member that you are a leader who cares about seeing that person do well.

Quarterly conversations. While the weekly meeting is with the entire office, quarterly conversations are opportunities for one-on-one meetings with staff. This

is a great time to check in with team members to see how they are doing. The team members score themselves in five different categories, and then I score them. We then compare our scores.

This is a great way to communicate areas that are strong and areas that need to be improved, so that team members feel encouraged and supported.

Generosity. Never be cheap with your staff, and never nickel and dime them on

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anything. Do nice things for them. If you have the right team members on board, they will go out of their way for you if you are generous with them. Plus, the way you treat your staff will be the way they treat your clients. Give them a raise when they deserve one. Give them ample time off. I am even considering the idea of unlimited vacation time, which has proved to be extremely successful for many firms, as well as potentially allowing everyone to work a four-day work week.

The better you can lead your team, the better things become around the office for everyone. If you have other ideas on the topic of staff management, please email me at cearley@chrisearley.com because I would love to hear what they are. 