

[Differentiation: How Your Law Firm Can Thrive](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 18th, 2012

What does the legal profession look like? It is more “client driven” than ever before. Successful firms will differentiate themselves by:

- How well they understand their clients
- The relationships their senior lawyers have with their clients
- The skills of their junior lawyers and staff and
- The speed, effectiveness and efficiency of their services.



Law firms that anticipate client needs before other firms and before the clients themselves, will thrive.

Quality

Business clients expect to pay less and to get more in the current economy. Even so, they will pay more for better, and especially best quality for certain types of legal work. Firms should focus on areas of work where quality makes a difference to the client.

Superlative Service

Zappos has defined client service for other businesses. It is their brand. There are many stories of Zappos extraordinary service. One is known as Tony's Pizza Story. You can read the story and others at Zappos Milestone: Customer Service.

I read Another Zappos Story just recently about what Zappos did when shoes were delivered behind the customer's trash can and were taken when the trash was picked up. Your law firm can't do all the things that Zappos can do to have clients who tell great service stories about you. Yet, there are things your firm can do. How can your firm make client service a hallmark of your culture and provide the kind of service that sets Zappos apart from its competitors?

Bottom Line

You likely know that It costs five to six times more in time and energy to go out and get a new client than it does to maintain an existing firm client. It pays to be focused on client service rather than billable hours. The legal profession is changing rapidly. Clients are reducing the number of law firms with whom they do business. They will focus on firms that understand their industry, business and strategy.

Firms that are in tune with their clients, provide valuable services with highly trained and motivated lawyers, and use technology to improve efficiency; will be the winners. It will be an exciting ride if firms make the commitment and effort.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of ***Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout*** and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.