

## [11 Lessons I Learned While Serving Clients](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on October 22nd, 2012

Annual surveys reveal clients are not pleased with the service they receive from their law firms. Here are 11 lessons I learned while serving my clients. Your clients and client representatives want you:

1. To be responsive
2. To be Accessible (sorry, but 24/7)
3. To put their interests ahead of your own
4. To listen intently and actively
5. To visit and call them rather than only communicating by email
6. Perform the legal work efficiently, effectively and economically
7. Accurately bill them
8. Never surprise them
9. Understand their business and industry
10. Anticipate their problems



There is one more really lesson I learned while serving clients. I have said many times that my clients were (and remain) my best friends and my friends were my best clients. We dined together, vacationed together and spent time in each other's homes.

My last trial was in 2005. After weeks of preparation, four weeks of trial, and my cross-examination of the first two adversary witnesses, the other side said: " No Mas" and we settled the case. My client and close friend, Bob said this about the experience:

The relationships have been transformed from being purely professional to both professional and personal. That transition is a natural outcome of the bonds that develop in the common effort to overcome adversity. There is an old Russian proverb, probably came out of the salt mines in Siberia – “You never really know a man until you’ve packed salt with him.” Facing adversity together gives us remarkable insight into each other’s character.

When you work on a case together or a deal together, you eat many meals together, drink many cups of coffee together and spend many, many hours and days together. As my friend, Bob, pointed out, you build a very strong tie because you are working hard as a team to successfully complete the matter.

**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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).