

Superstar Associates: How to be One!

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10 Secrets to being a Standout Law Associate



You survived law school and managed to get your foot in the door at your dream firm.

The fun and games are over. Now, it's time to put what you've learned to the test.

As an ambitious associate, this is your **TIME TO SHINE!**

Strive to stand out among your peers. Show them that you can do more than tow the line. Show them, rather, that you can *add real value* to the firm **NOW** and **LONG TERM**.

How?

Jonathan Childers, a member of the Board of Directors at the [Dallas Young Lawyers Association](#), reveals these ten secrets to being a superstar associate.

1. Own up to your work.

Take ownership of a file, anticipate problems, and offer solutions to your supervising attorneys.

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2. Be proactive.

Anticipate and plan for the future before it occurs. Ask for deadlines and keep partners informed on the status of projects. These efforts will please partners and clients, and prevent unnecessary strain on legal staff.

Also, take responsibility for your actions as well as those of staff members who assist with their work. Do not blame team members.

Remember, you want to lead by example.

3. Become result-oriented.

Strive to deliver results quickly.

View law as a service business, and try to understand your clients as well as value their time and money.

4. Think strategically.

Slow down and take the time to map-out procedural issues or key components of a deal. Early examination may prevent future headaches.

5. Be a team player.

The best associates are team players who take a personal interest in the firm's success.

6. Respect firm employees.

Treat every staff member the same way you treat your boss. Also, remember that senior associates and of-counsel can be great resources. Seek their advice on matters concerning legal analysis, ethical dilemmas, and procedural questions.

7. Report mistakes.

Report mistakes to supervising attorneys shortly after making them, but be sure to propose a solution.

Learn from your mistakes, but don't dwell on them.

The partners at the firm will notice how you respond to adversity as well as to success.

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8. Practice consistency.

Success results from exercising good habits everyday.

Don't procrastinate. Be prompt when responding to emails or attending a meeting. Maintain a calendar and ensure that all deadlines are met.

9. Time entry speaks volumes.

Entering time truthfully and on-schedule is an outstanding way to establish credibility. Follow the firm's rules concerning time entry, and make it a good habit.

10. Make time for YOU.

While life as an associate can be grueling, it's important not to neglect your family, spiritual life, or your health. Maintain self-control when you're stressed and be sure to implement healthy habits (i.e. proper rest, nutrition).

Leading the life of a superstar associate is not as hard as you think, but having the drive to succeed won't be enough - *you must also take smart, deliberate action to move yourself toward eventual partnership!*

Those actions will exemplify your true desire for success - so let them shine!

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