

Leadership Development in Law Firms

Questions to ask yourself when launching a leadership development initiative:

1. What problem am I trying to address?
2. Whose support do I need to launch leadership development initiatives?
 - a. How can I get that support?
3. For whom do we need to create leadership development initiatives?
 - a. Staff, associates, junior partners, counsel, senior partners?
 - b. Problem lawyers or high-potential lawyers
 - c. Does everyone at the same level (e.g., all partners) need the same amount of training, or do I select a sub-group to receive additional development?
4. What competencies, skills, or mindset should the development initiative cover?
 - a. Self-awareness, EQ, communication, time management, delegating, leadership styles, etc.
5. Who will help me develop this training?
 - a. Do we have adequate internal talent (between professional development and partners)?
 - b. Should we hire outside experts to deliver programs designed in-house?
 - c. Should we partner with a law or business school to develop an in-house program?
 - d. Should we send a select group of lawyers to an external, open-enrollment program?
6. What techniques can we use to help leadership skills stick?
 - a. On the job (committees, assignments)
 - b. Assessments
 - c. Simulated work problems
 - d. Coaching (in formal learning and outside)
 - e. Mentoring

Typical Characteristics of Different Leadership Initiatives

	In-house program with internal experts as faculty	In-house program using individual external experts as faculty	Partnering with outside providers on program development	Send attorneys to open-enrollment programs
Cost per participant (typically)	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High	Highest
Career stage of participants	Any, from most junior to most senior	Any, from most junior to most senior	Any, from most junior to most senior	Typically more senior – new partners and higher
Faculty	In-house experts (partners, counsel)	External experts – your pick	External experts from your partner	External experts associated with each program
Number of participants	Better for larger programs (>10 per program)	Flexible for both small and large programs, depending on your consultants	Better for larger programs (>10 per program)	Better for smaller programs (<= 5 per program)
Example	Leadership panel with partners as panelists	Program co-designed and facilitated with external consultant & internal executives	Joint leadership program developed with a business or law school and offered in-house	Leadership program hosted for partners from multiple firms at a business or law school