

Getting Gen Y to Yes:
Keys to Engaging Millennials

MILLENNIAL LAWYER RESEARCH

Part 1 and Selected Reading

NALP Annual Education Conference Boston, MA

K&L GATES

Darien Fleming,
Professional Development Manager, K&L Gates
Darien.Fleming@klgates.com



Grover E. Cleveland,
Speaker and Author, Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks
Grover@lessonsforsharks.com

LATHAM &
WATKINS LLP

Katherine Larkin-Wong,
Associate Latham & Watkins LLP
President, Ms. JD
Katherine.Larkin-Wong@lw.com

Presenter Biographies

Grover E. Cleveland is a Seattle lawyer, speaker and the author of *Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks: The Essential Guide to Thriving as a New Lawyer* published by West in 2010. Grover is a former partner at Foster Pepper PLLC, one of the larger law firms in the Northwest. A frequent speaker at NALP conferences, Grover partners with law firms and law schools on professionalism and practical skills programs to help millennial lawyers provide more value and avoid common mistakes. Grover is also a regular contributor on career success for millennial lawyers for Ms. JD's blog, Above the Law's Career Center, American Lawyer Media's Careerist blog and numerous American Bar Association publications and blogs.

Darien Fleming is the Professional Development Manager for the global law firm K&L Gates LLP. As a Professional Development Manager, Darien is responsible for the development and training needs of associates located throughout the West Coast, Texas, and Asia. Within her role, she both designs and delivers firmwide training programs. Darien also manages the firm's professionalism skills, writing and negotiation curricula. She works collaboratively with the firm's business development team to offer practice development training sessions and coaching. Darien serves as a career advisor and counsels associates in their development.

Katherine Larkin-Wong is an associate in the Litigation Department at Latham & Watkins. She is a litigation associate in Latham's Global Competition and White Collar Practices. She has also been active in Latham's pro bono efforts, having successfully represented clients in asylum, immigration and human trafficking cases. Katherine is also immediate past President of Ms. JD, a national nonprofit that supports aspiring and early-career women lawyers. Katherine is a frequent speaker and writer on issues related to women law students and young lawyers and has been featured in Forbes Woman, The Glass Hammer, The American Bar Association's Woman Advocate, The National Journal, AmLaw Daily and Today's Chicago Woman.

Selected Reading:

1. *Managing the Millennials: Discover the Core Competencies for Managing Today's Workforce* by Chip Espinoza and Mick Ukleja
2. Neha Sampat Blog Post <https://medium.com/@NehaMSampat/from-boss-to-partner-the-changing-landscape-of-leadership-8bfdcb901939#.kp99afwcu> .
3. Four Ways Millennials Are Changing Big Law:
<http://www.law360.com/articles/701439/4-ways-millennials-are-changing-biglawn>
4. The Millennial Lawyer and BigLaw Hunger Games:
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidparnell/2013/10/30/the-millennial-lawyer-and-biglawn-hunger-games/#6af8ca2e35e4>
5. Work-Life Balance: A Response to the Curmudgeon <http://ms-jd.org/blog/article/work-life-balance-response-curmudgeon>
6. Happiness Math: <http://ms-jd.org/blog/article/happiness-math>
7. Thoughts on “From Generation to Generation: Remarkable Women Leaders”
<http://ms-jd.org/blog/article/thoughts-generation-generation-remarkable-women-leaders>

Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks: Results from the Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks/Above the Law Millennial Survey

By GROVER E. CLEVELAND

98 Shares / Jul 17, 2015 at 11:16 AM

Associates feel welcome, want more feedback and are split on partnership. And many don't record all their time.

Despite regular admonitions from firms, many millennial lawyers cut their own time. That was a key finding from a recent [Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks/Above the Law](#) survey of millennial lawyers.

Partners and firm finance officers regularly lament that new lawyers don't record all their time. The survey results won't help those folks sleep at night.

In response to the statement: "I always record all of my time on every project," 37% of millennial lawyers *disagreed*. That's a lot of lawyers and a lot of money.

Survey Background

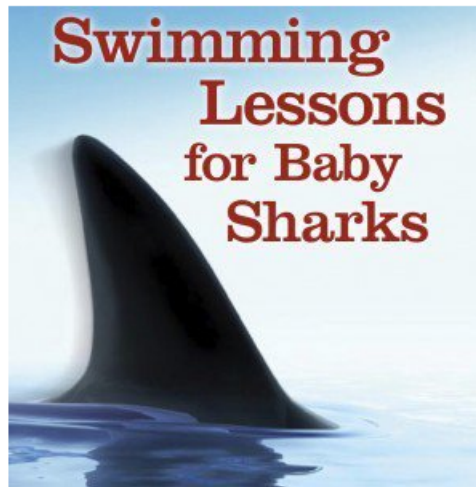
The results are from an online survey I developed in partnership with *Above the Law* and [Ms. JD](#).

Recent grads often struggle with business aspects of practicing law, understanding the perspective of partners and building relationships within firms. In our survey, many new lawyers did not think law school prepared them for practice. Many also said they don't know how to advance in their careers.

The survey was open to lawyers who were born in 1980 or later and asked respondents to agree or disagree on a wide range of topics relating to new lawyer careers and perspectives on work. Thanks to all the *Above the Law* readers who participated!

Although 880 participants began the survey, the age question disqualified 46 lawyers. Curious.

Most questions received about 655 responses. More than one-third of the respondents worked at firms with more than 500 lawyers. This was the largest single group of respondents.



To compare the perspectives of law firm Professional Development professionals, we gave a similar survey to members of the [Professional Development Consortium](#). Katherine Larkin-Wong, President of Ms. JD, Darien Fleming, Manager of Professional Development for K&L Gates, and I presented highlights of the findings at the Professional Development Consortium Conference in San Francisco on July 9.

Firm Finances

While 37% of the millennial associates cut their own time, the PD professionals uniformly panned the practice. Ninety-six percent said that associates should always record all their time on every project.

New lawyers can sabotage their careers in many ways, but cutting their own time is one of the most [insidious](#). Time spent counseling new lawyers on that issue is time well spent.

With respect to overall firm finances, 60% percent of the millennial respondents said that contributing to their firm's financial success was a high priority for them. This is similar to the number who said they always record all their hours.

But associates aren't demonstrating their commitment to the financial success of firms. Only 20% of PD professionals thought that associates considered contributing to the firm's financial success to be a high priority.

Building Relationships

Understanding how to build relationships with senior lawyers is another challenge for new lawyers. A question on that topic revealed a huge disconnect between PD professionals and their associates. In responding to the statement: "Associates should treat senior lawyers as their clients," 93% of PD professionals agreed. Only 54% of millennial lawyers agreed.

Why the gap? Some new lawyers view senior lawyers primarily as mentors – or their backup. There is a common misconception among new lawyers that the role of more senior lawyers is to fix the work of junior lawyers. Senior lawyers do not want to do that. Supervising attorneys will perform a quality-control function, but they want junior lawyers to do their own work and do it well. Clients won't pay for work and rework.

To succeed, millennial lawyers must provide value to senior lawyers, just as those lawyers provide value to external clients. But the concept of providing value can seem foreign to new grads. Providing value is generally not a skill that law schools teach or require.

Preparation for Practice

Although the skills lawyers learn in school are critical, millennial associates understand they have much more to master. In recent years law schools have made significant strides in providing more practical skills training. But despite this progress, 72% of the millennial lawyers disagreed with the statement: “Law school prepared me to practice law.”

The PD professionals disagreed even more. In that group, 87% responded that law school had not prepared associates for practice. Only 13% of the PD professionals agreed that law school had prepared associates to practice law.

By contrast, when BARBRI surveyed third-year law students earlier this year, it found that 71% believe they “possess sufficient practice skills.” Why the disparate results? Until law students begin practice, they don’t know what they don’t know.

Learning and Advancement

Both the millennials and the PD professionals agreed that associates need more feedback about their work. Among the associates, 61% disagreed that they get enough feedback. In the PD professionals’ survey, 85% disagreed that associates get enough feedback on projects.

Millennial lawyers also want more mentoring and training. Fifty-nine percent of millennial lawyers disagreed that: “The firm provides enough mentoring, programming and career direction for me.” Results from the PD professionals were similar with 62% disagreeing that firms provide enough mentoring, programming and career direction.

The desire for more feedback and training likely reflects the uncertainty many lawyers feel about how to advance in their careers. In responding to the statement: “I know what I need to do to advance in my career,” 46% of millennial associates disagreed. PD professionals were even less sanguine. On that issue, 78% disagreed that associates know what to do to advance in their careers.

Although millennials want a roadmap for career advancement, they know they must do the driving. Of the millennial lawyers, 89% agreed with the statement: “I am primarily responsible for my own career.” On this issue, millennials and PD professionals had a mind meld. 89% of PD professionals also agreed associates should be primarily responsible for their own career.

By a large margin, millennial associates also agree that the more they work, the more they learn. In responding to the statement: “The more I work, the more I learn,” 67% agreed. Of the PD professionals, 64% agreed that the more associates work the more they learn.

Work

Millennials are often popularly portrayed as slackers. Yet 92% of millennial associates said they make sacrifices in their personal lives to accommodate work. In the PD group, 67% agreed: “Associates should make sacrifices in their personal life to accommodate their work.”

And what about working not just on weekends, but also on holidays and vacations? Of the millennial lawyers, 53% agreed that: “It is normal and expected for me to need to be available for work over holidays and while on vacation.” Among the PD professionals, 63% agreed that associates need to be available for work during those times.

Desire for Partnership

Finally, firms and their associates get off to a strong start. Overall, firms do an excellent job making new lawyers feel welcome and included when they start work. Of the millennial lawyers, 88% agreed. In responding to the statement: “New lawyers feel welcome and included when they start at your firm,” 93% of PD professionals agreed.

But do associates ultimately believe that becoming a partner is worth the effort? Millennial lawyers split on that issue: 45% thought making partner was worth the effort, while 55% disagreed. In responding to the statement, “Associates believe that becoming a partner is worth the effort,” 27% of PD professionals agreed and 73% disagreed.

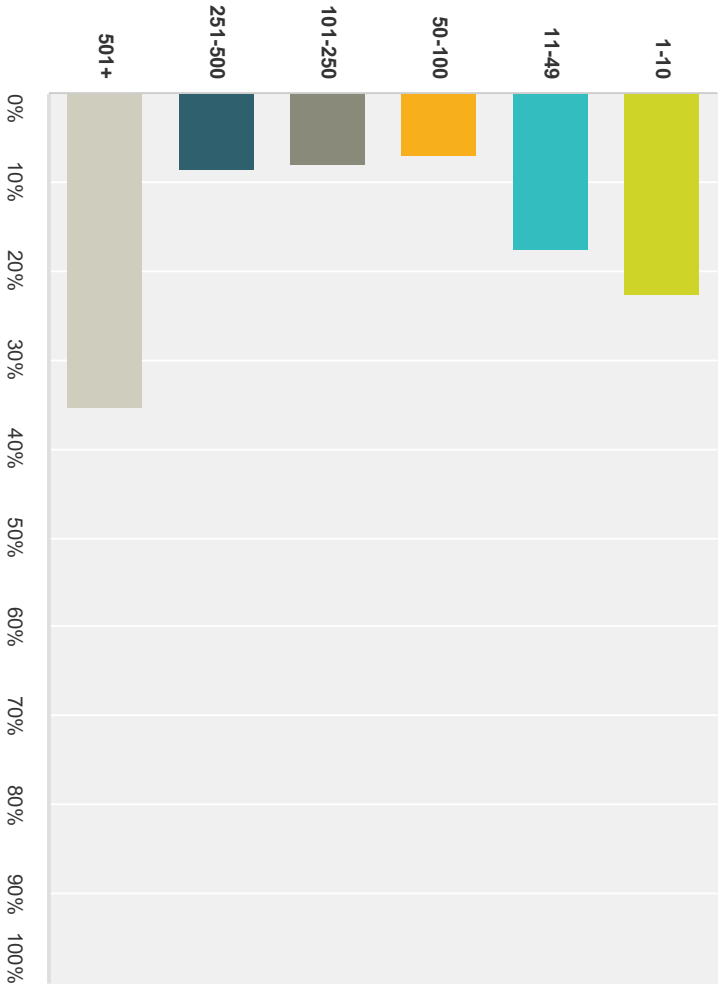


Grover E. Cleveland is a Seattle lawyer, speaker and author of *Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks: The Essential Guide to Thriving as a New Lawyer* (West 2010). He is a former partner at Foster Pepper PLLC, one of the Northwest's larger firms. His clients included the Seattle Seahawks and other entities owned by Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen. Grover is a frequent presenter on new lawyer career success at law schools

and firms nationwide. Some of the questions in this column come from those presentations. Readers may submit questions [here](#) or follow him on Twitter [@Babysharklaw](#). He is not related to the 22nd and 24th President of the United States.

Q1 What size is your Law Firm?

Answered: 888 Skipped: 0



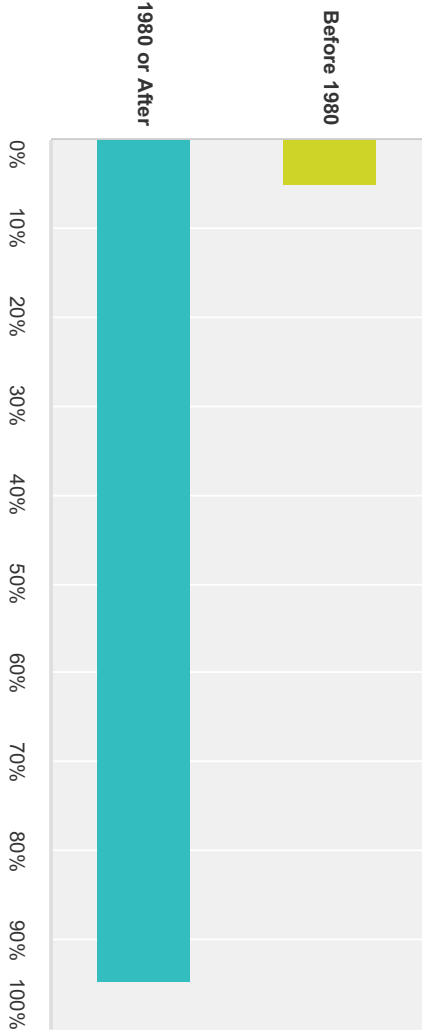
Answer Choices	Responses	
1-10	22.75%	202
11-49	17.79%	158
50-100	7.09%	63
101-250	8.11%	72
251-500	8.78%	78
501+	35.47%	315

Millennial Survey

Total	888
-------	-----

Q2 When were you born?

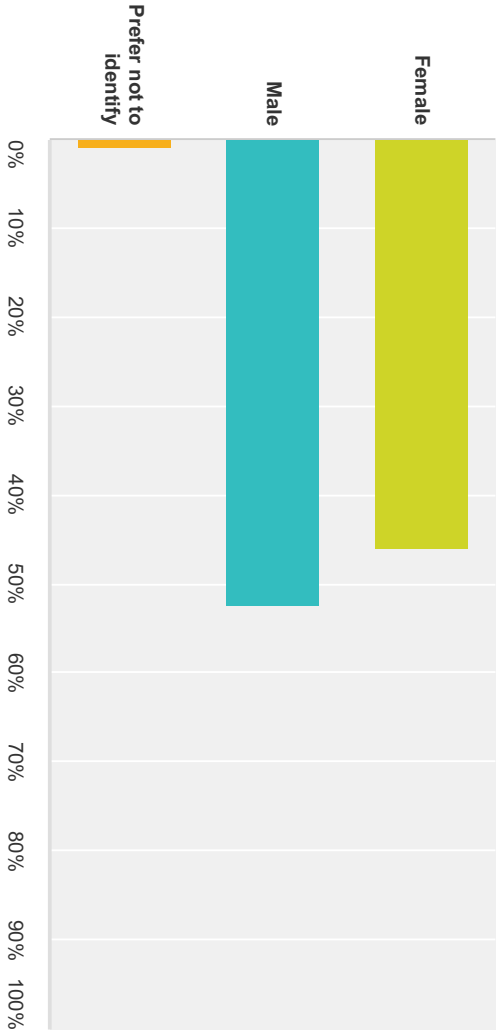
Answered: 888 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Before 1980	5.18%
1980 or After	94.82%
Total	888

Q3 What is your gender?

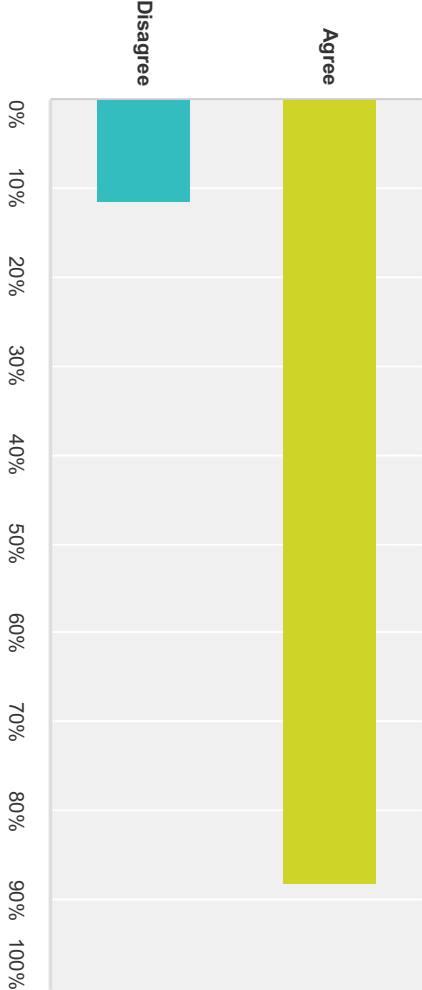
Answered: 886 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	46.16%	409
Male	52.71%	467
Prefer not to identify	1.13%	10
Total		886

Q4 I felt welcome and included when I started at the firm.

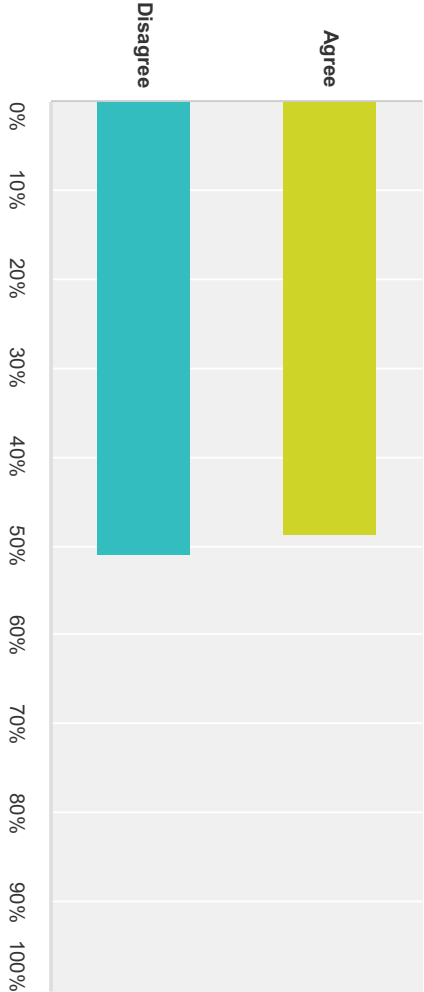
Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	88.24%	578
Disagree	11.76%	77
Total		655

Q5 My firm uses technology effectively.

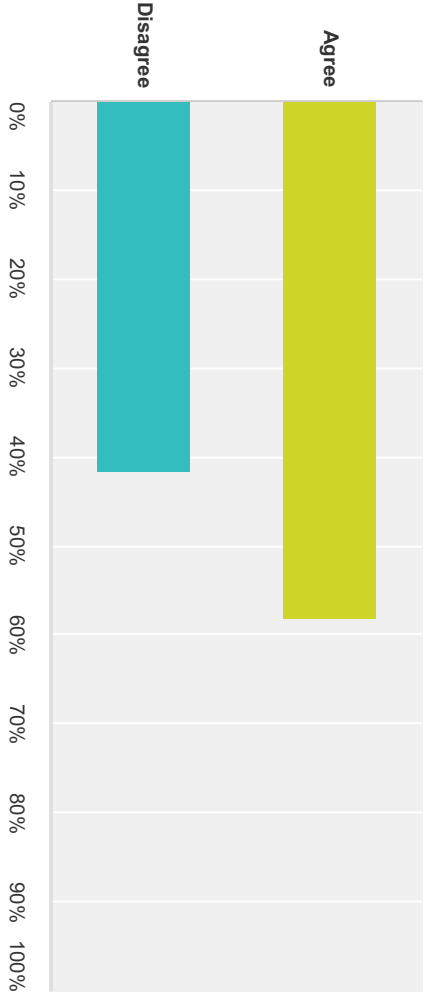
Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	48.85%	320
Disagree	51.15%	335
Total		655

Q6 I deserve more responsibility.

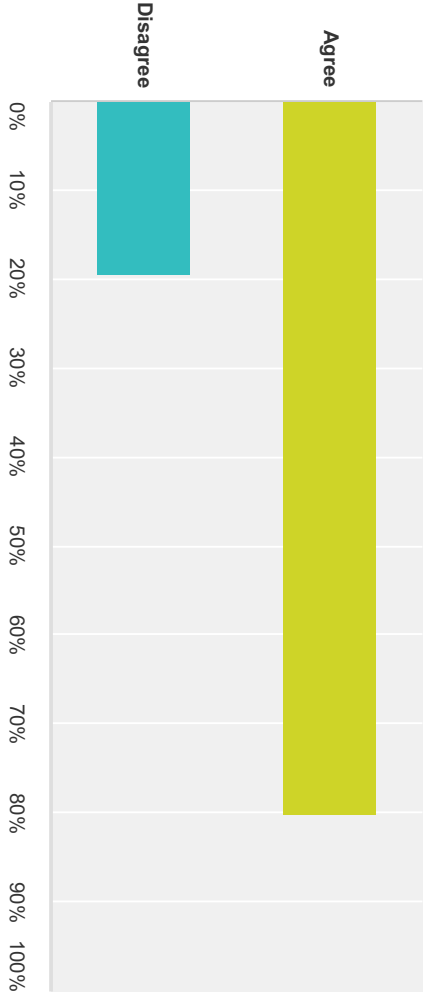
Answered: 653 Skipped: 235



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	58.35%	381
Disagree	41.65%	272
Total		653

Q7 Trying hard should be rewarded.

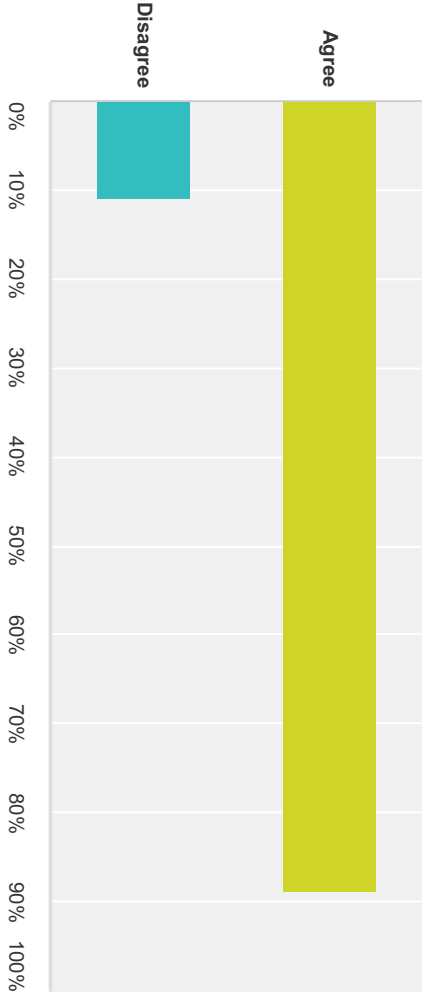
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	80.28%	525
Disagree	19.72%	129
Total		654

Q8 I am primarily responsible for my own career.

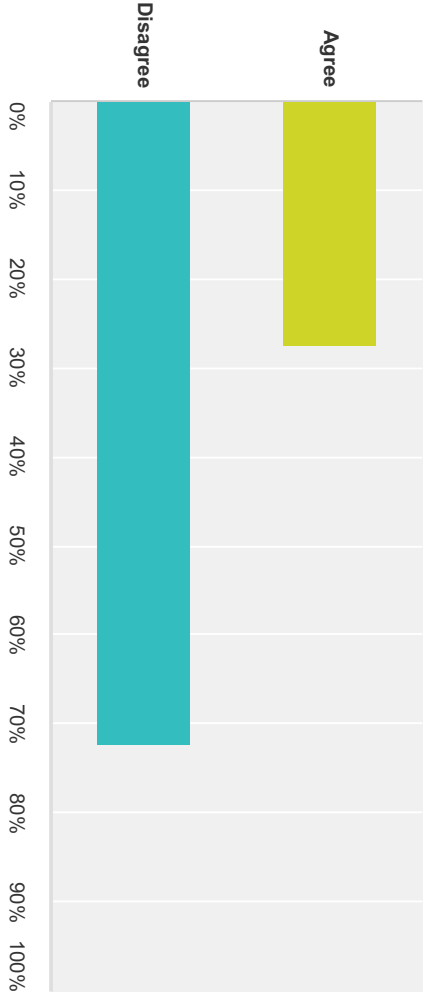
Answered: 656 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	89.02%	584
Disagree	10.98%	72
Total		656

Q9 Law school prepared me to practice law.

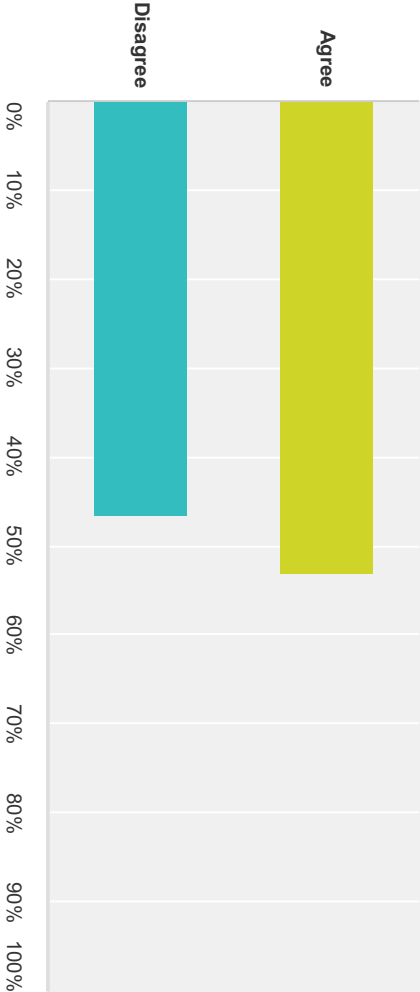
Answered: 657 Skipped: 231



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	27.55%	181
Disagree	72.45%	476
Total		657

Q10 It is normal and expected for me to need to be available for work over holidays and while on vacation.

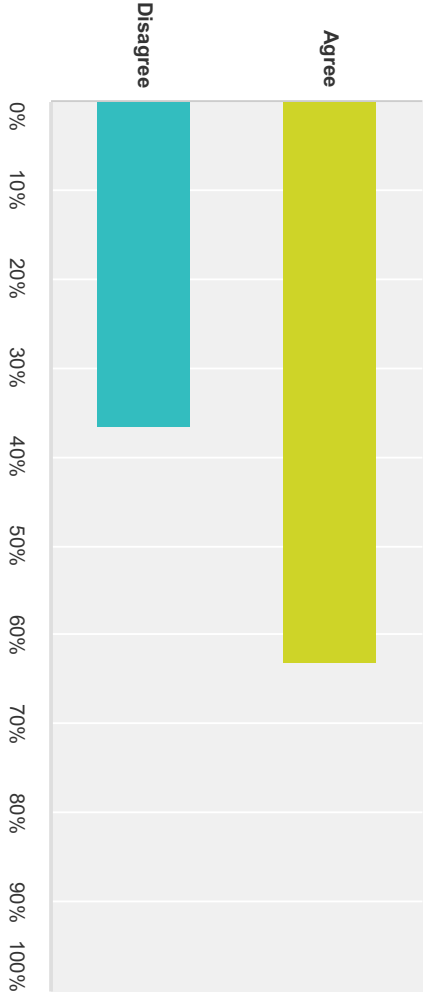
Answered: 653 Skipped: 235



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	53.14%	347
Disagree	46.86%	306
Total		653

Q11 I record all of my time on every project.

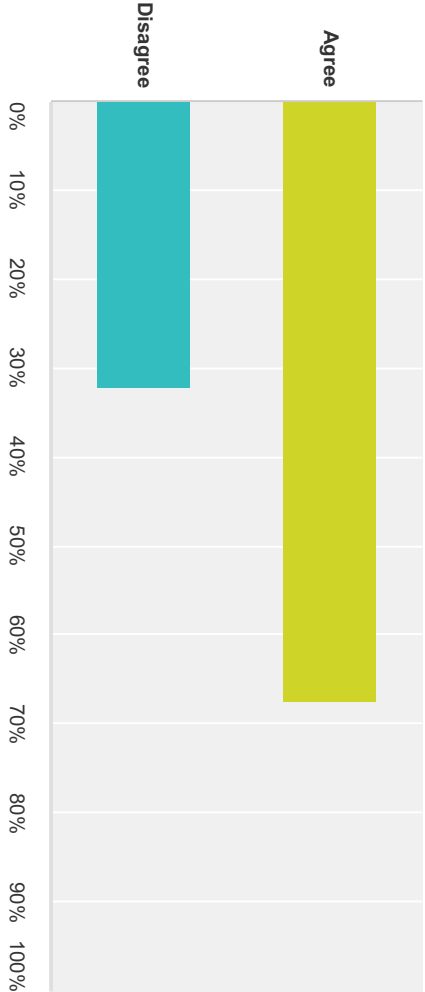
Answered: 657 Skipped: 231



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	63.32%	416
Disagree	36.68%	241
Total		657

Q12 The firm values me.

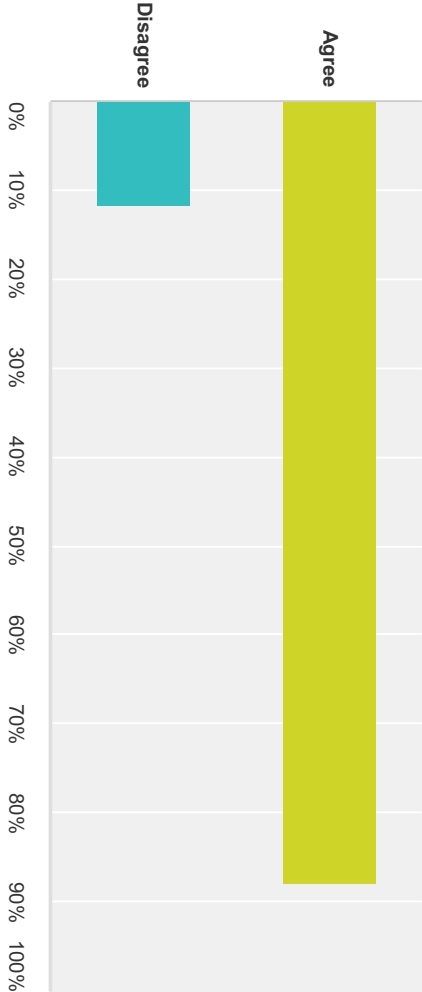
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	67.74%	443
Disagree	32.26%	211
Total		654

Q13 I try to make myself indispensable to senior lawyers.

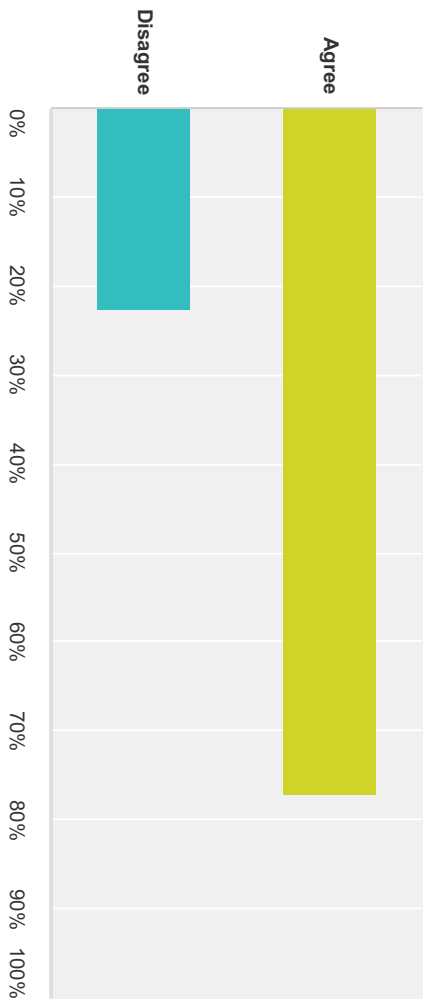
Answered: 656 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	88.11%	578
Disagree	11.89%	78
Total		656

Q14 The more I work, the more I learn.

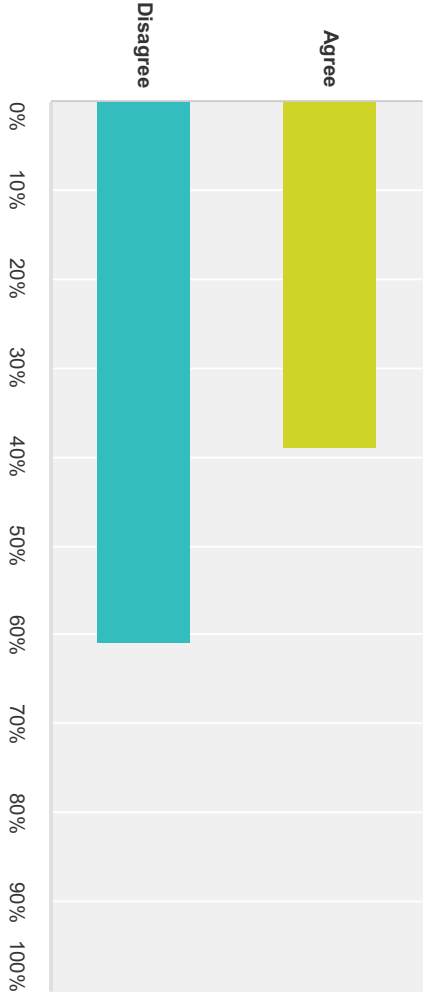
Answered: 656 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	77.29%	507
Disagree	22.71%	149
Total		656

Q15 I get enough feedback about my work.

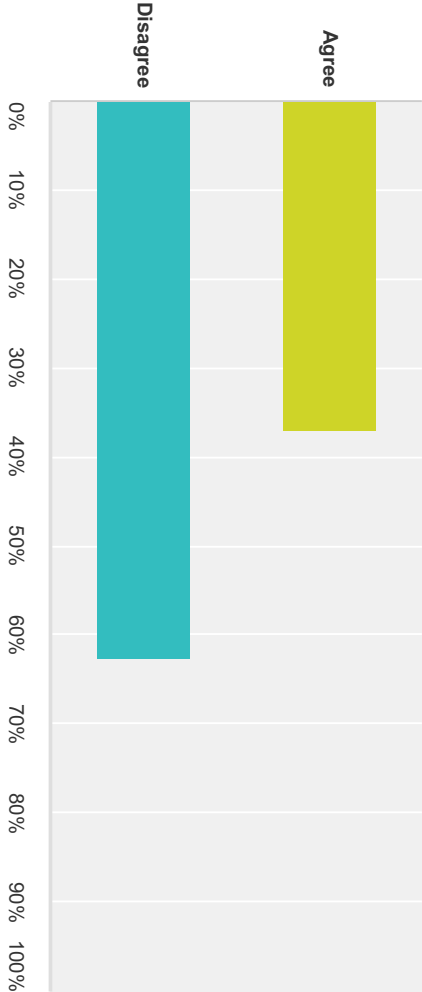
Answered: 652 Skipped: 236



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	39.11%	255
Disagree	60.89%	397
Total		652

Q16 The firm expects too much of associates.

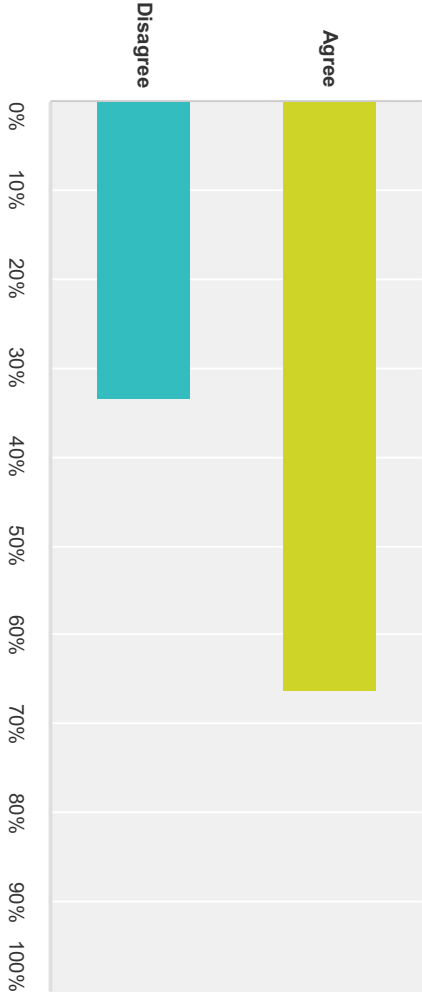
Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	37.10%	243
Disagree	62.90%	412
Total		655

Q17 Associates should be given a greater voice in firm policies.

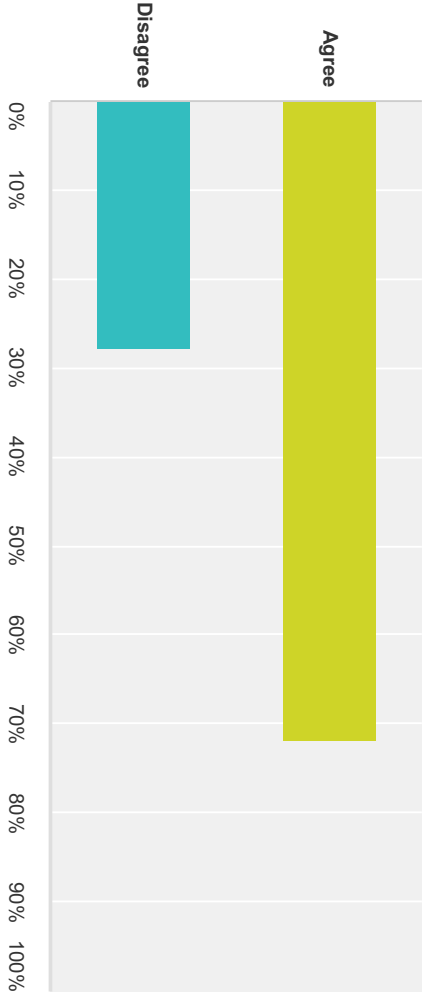
Answered: 656 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	66.31%	435
Disagree	33.69%	221
Total		656

Q18 I should not have to be in the office if I
can do my work remotely.

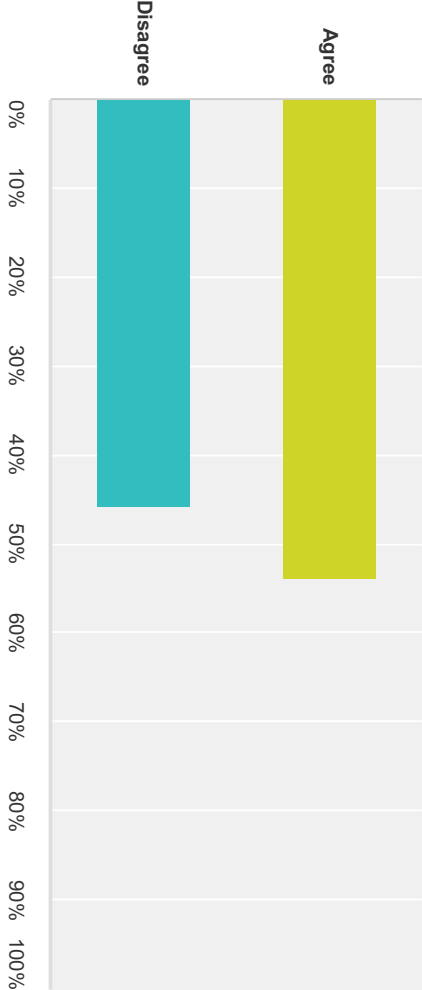
Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	72.06%	472
Disagree	27.94%	183
Total		655

Q19 I know what I need to do to advance in my career.

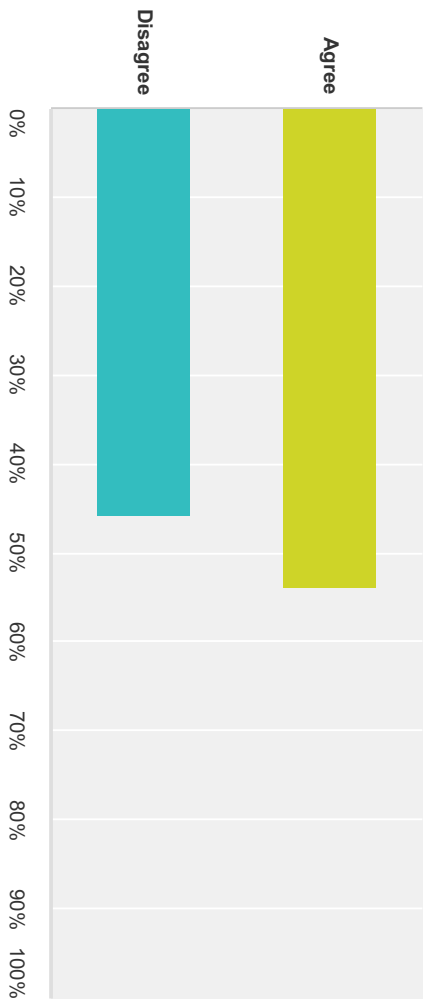
Answered: 656 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	54.12%	355
Disagree	45.88%	301
Total		656

Q20 I trust my firm.

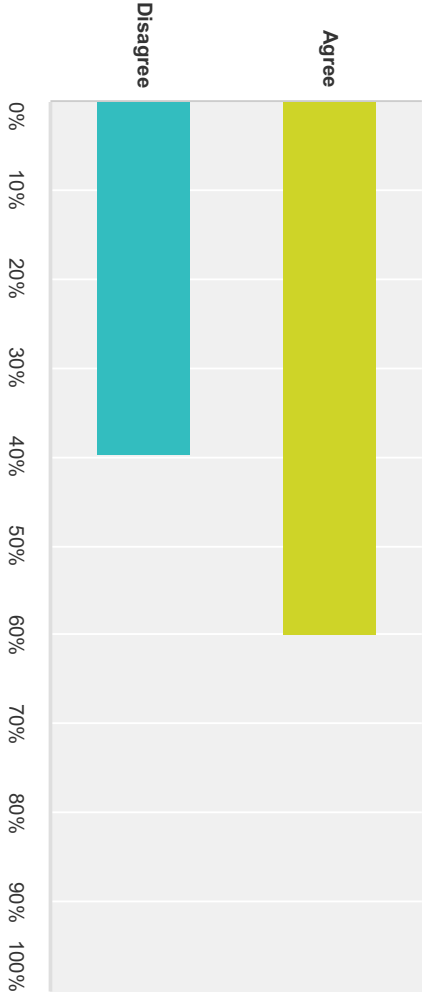
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	53.98%	353
Disagree	46.02%	301
Total		654

Q21 Contributing to the financial success of
the firm is a high priority for me.

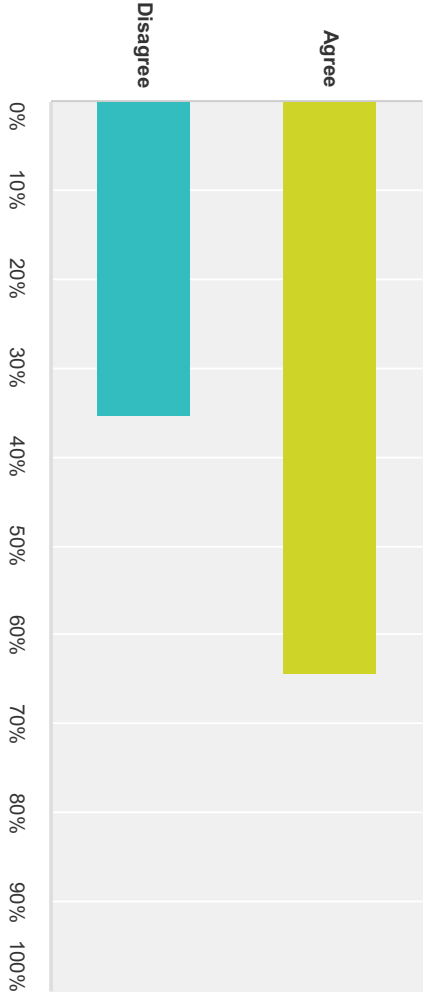
Answered: 653 Skipped: 235



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	60.03%	392
Disagree	39.97%	261
Total		653

Q22 Networking is a high priority for me.

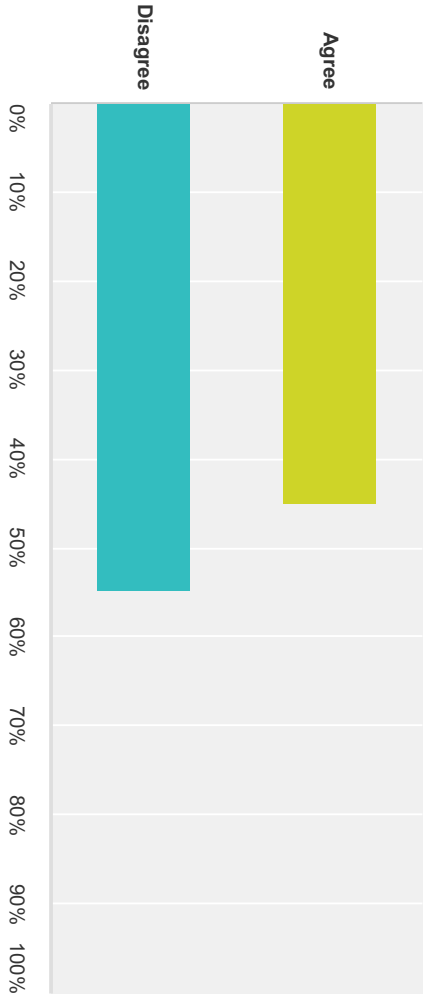
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	64.53%	422
Disagree	35.47%	232
Total		654

Q23 Becoming a partner is worth the effort.

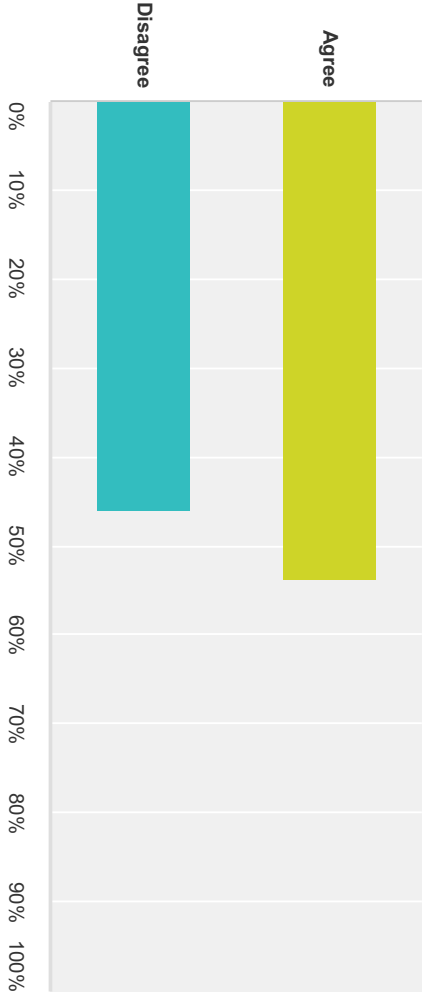
Answered: 651 Skipped: 237



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	45.16%	294
Disagree	54.84%	357
Total		651

Q24 Associates should treat senior lawyers
as if they were clients.

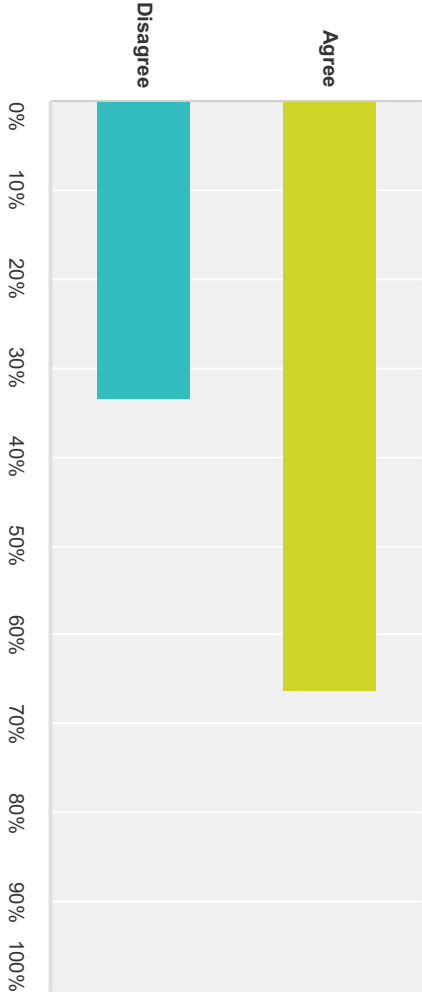
Answered: 652 Skipped: 236



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	53.83%	351
Disagree	46.17%	301
Total		652

Q25 The firm should do more to invest in my career.

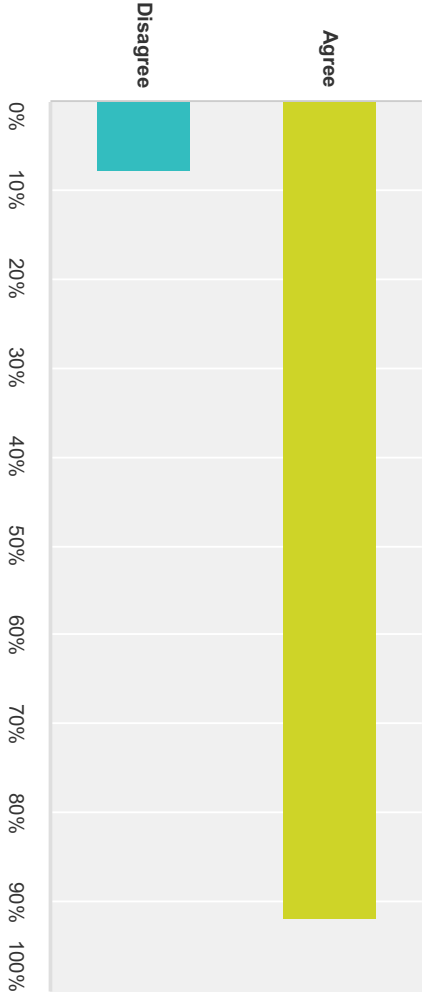
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	66.36%	434
Disagree	33.64%	220
Total		654

Q26 I make sacrifices in my personal life to
accommodate my work.

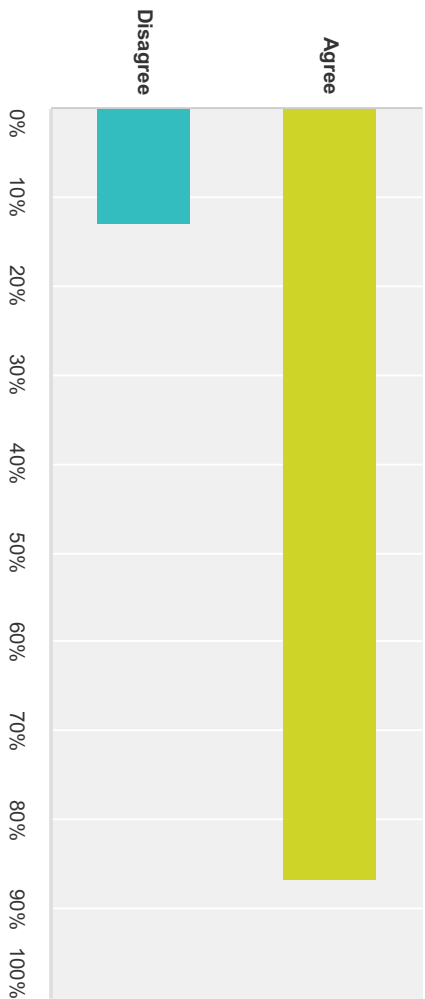
Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	92.06%	603
Disagree	7.94%	52
Total		655

Q27 I am tech-savvy.

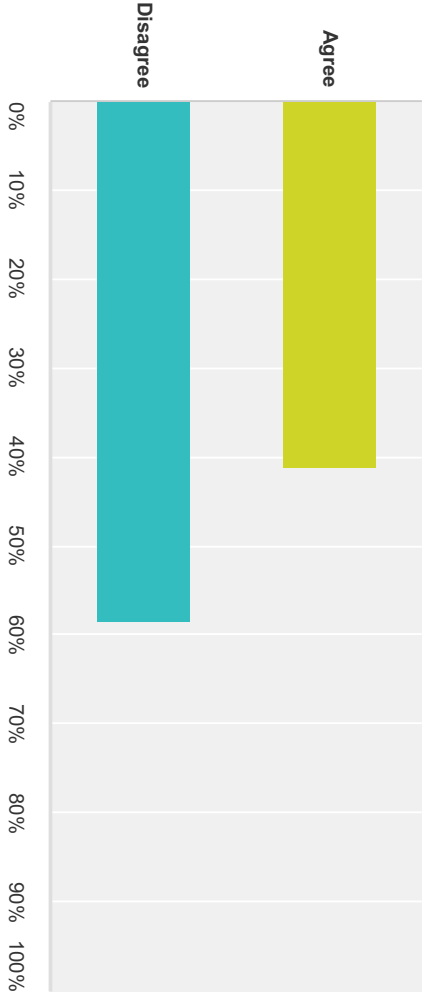
Answered: 651 Skipped: 237



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	86.94%	566
Disagree	13.06%	85
Total		651

Q28 The firm provides enough mentoring, programming and career direction for me.

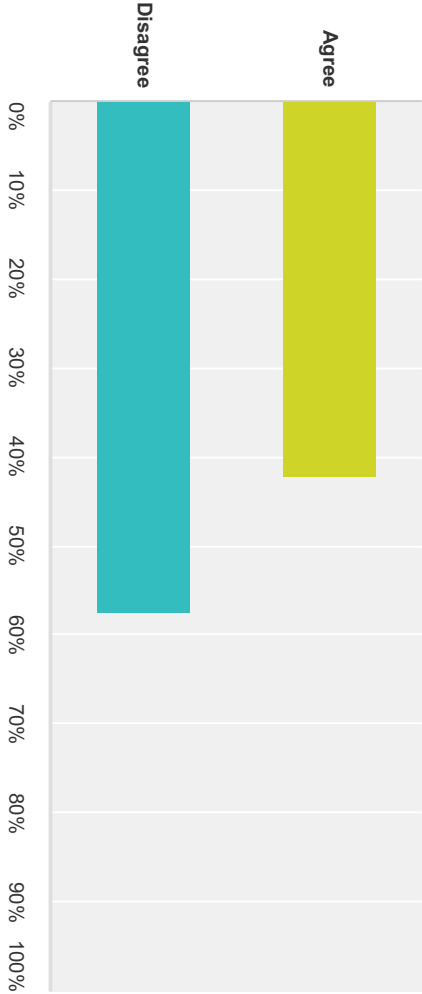
Answered: 652 Skipped: 236



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	41.41%	270
Disagree	58.59%	382
Total		652

Q29 I am happy with the firm's mentoring,
training and career guidance.

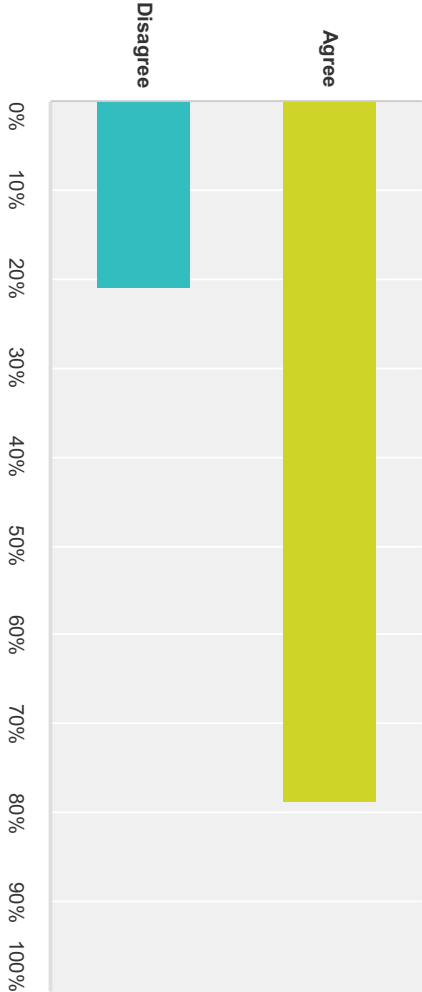
Answered: 653 Skipped: 235



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	42.42%	277
Disagree	57.58%	376
Total		653

Q30 I should get feedback without having to ask for it.

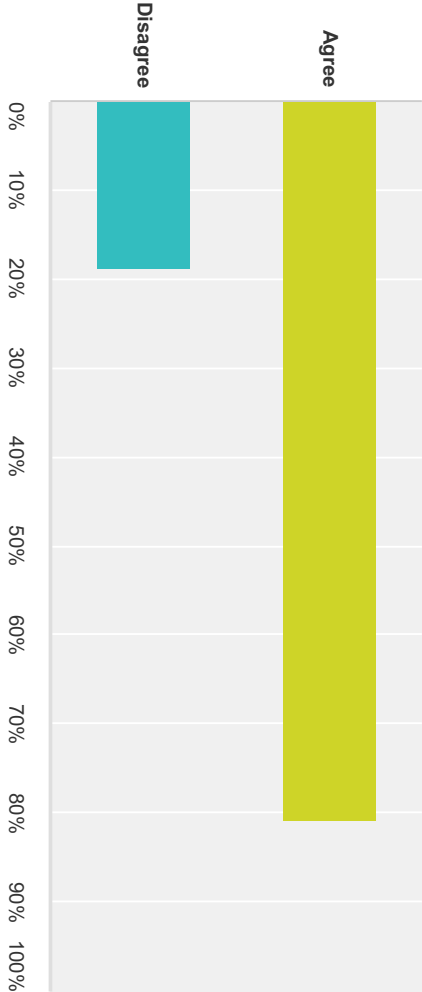
Answered: 654 Skipped: 234



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	78.90%	516
Disagree	21.10%	138
Total		654

Q31 How much I work should be less important than what I produce.

Answered: 655 Skipped: 233



Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	80.92%	530
Disagree	19.08%	125
Total		655