

# Engagement 2.0: Why Coaching Beats Perks Every Time


**Christie Mizer, JD, CPCC**  
Director of Professional Development & Coaching  
Beveridge & Diamond, PC

**Laura Yerhot, MPP, MBA, ACC**  
Career Coaching & Planning Manager  
Troutman Pepper Locke LLP

**Yuliya LaRoe, JD, MBA, PCC**  
CEO, Law Firm Consultant & Coach  
LeadWise Group, Inc

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<p><b>Christie Mizer, JD, CPCC</b> Director of Professional Development &amp; Coaching Beveridge &amp; Diamond, PC</p>	<p><b>Laura Yerhot, MPP, MBA, ACC</b> Career Coaching &amp; Planning Manager Troutman Pepper Locke, LLP</p>	<p><b>Yuliya LaRoe, JD, MBA, PCC</b> Law Firm Consultant &amp; Certified Coach CEO at LeadWise Group, Inc</p>
<p>Connect on LinkedIn</p> 	<p>Connect on LinkedIn</p> 	<p>Connect on LinkedIn</p> 

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## Agenda

1. What is employee engagement
2. How coaching can drive engagement
3. What coaching is and what it's not
4. Practical coaching solutions that increase engagement
5. Action planning - Build your own coaching program!

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## How does your firm promote engagement?

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## Tools Often Used to Improve Engagement



### Perks & Lifestyle Benefits

*Short-Term Engagement,  
Often Superficial*

- Free meals, snacks, and coffee bars (kombucha on tap, anyone?)
- Office happy hours and social events
- Gym memberships or wellness stipends
- Concierge services (e.g., dry cleaning, travel booking, meal delivery)

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## Employee Engagement 2.0

Based on extensive research in motivation theory (*Self-Determination Theory*, *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory*, *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, and modern workplace studies), the top **five elements that have the greatest impact on employee motivation and engagement** are:

1. Autonomy & Control
2. Purpose & Meaning
3. Growth & Development
4. Recognition & Appreciation
5. Supportive Firm Culture



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## Why Coaching Beats Perks & Other Engagement Tools

### ❌ The Problem with “Perks”

- **Short-term appeal, no long-term impact** – Temporary morale boost; underlying disengagement issues persist
- **No connection to purpose** – Lawyers still feel disconnected from their work
- **Retention isn’t about perks** – High salaries and benefits don’t prevent turnover
- **Surface-level solutions** – Free snacks, happy hours, and wellness stipends don’t drive true engagement

### ✅ Impact of Coaching

- **Unlocks intrinsic motivation** → Connects Lawyers with their “why”
- **Develops long-term career investment** → Employees feel supported & valued
- **Enhances performance & fulfillment** → Growth-oriented cultures boost engagement
- **Creates a ripple effect** → Coached professionals drive engagement firm-wide
- **Strengthens resilience & adaptability** → Lawyers navigate challenges confidently and proactively

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## What Is Coaching?

Coaching is a **partnership between a coach and a client** who engage in a **thought-provoking, non-judgmental and creative** conversation that **inspires the client** to maximize their personal and professional potential.

Coaching is NOT counseling, mentoring, consulting, advising, therapy, or telling someone what to do.

Coaching is about transforming:



Mindset



Feelings



Actions



Results

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# Busting Myths About Coaching

**Myth 1: “We can’t afford it” →**  
**Budget-Flexible Strategies Exist**

- Coaching isn’t about massive budgets—it’s about smart investment in strategic development
- Budget-friendly options: Peer coaching, group coaching, on-demand resources, AI coaches (low-cost, high-impact); leverage external coaches selectively.

**Myth 2: “It’s only for top performers” →**  
**Coaching Benefits Everyone**

- Coaching isn’t an exclusive perk—it’s a tool for engagement, retention, and firm-wide growth.
- Ex: Integrating coaching into feedback conversations for early-career development.

**Myth 3: “We don’t have time” →**  
**Coaching Integrates into Daily Work**

- Coaching doesn’t have to be a time drain—when embedded properly, it enhances productivity and decision-making
- Micro-coaching moments: Integrate coaching into everyday 1:1s and meetings
- Train partners & managers on basic coaching skills

**Myth 4: “Results from coaching are hard to track” →**  
**ROI Can Be Measured**

- ROI can be tracked through lawyer feedback/self-reported progress, engagement surveys, retention rates, BD growth, client relationship improvement

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# Two Coaching Skills that Anyone Can Utilize

## 1. Asking Powerful Questions

- What
- Who
- When
- How

## 2. Active Listening

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## Small & Mid-size Firm Perspective: Beveridge & Diamond's Coaching Approach

Prioritizing Coaching During Career Transition Stages	Integrating Coaching into Virtual Training	Basic Coaching Skills Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First-Year Associates:</b> group coaching</li> <li>• <b>Mid-Level Associates:</b> management skills + group coaching</li> <li>• <b>Senior Associates:</b> leadership development + opt-in 1-1 coaching</li> <li>• <b>New Shareholders:</b> opt-in 1-1 coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lunch &amp; Learns:</b> Online learning modules paired with facilitated group discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a culture of coaching</li> <li>• Skill-building for partners</li> </ul>

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## Large Firm Perspective: Career Coaching at Troutman Pepper Locke

 Team of Career Coaches	 Professional Skills Programs	 Academies & Orientations	 Practice & Affinity Groups
<p><b>1:1 Coaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summer Associates</li> <li>- Associates</li> <li>- Counsel</li> <li>- Partners</li> </ul> <p><b>Group Coaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1st Year Associates</li> </ul> <p><b>Transition Coaching</b></p>	<p><b>Career Planning</b></p> <p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving</li> <li>- Receiving</li> <li>- Goal-Setting</li> <li>- Mentoring</li> </ul> <p><b>Time Management</b></p> <p><b>Can be creative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Podcast-based micro-learning with action planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>ELA Academy</b></p> <p><b>Lateral Orientation</b></p> <p><b>Leadership Academy</b></p> <p><b>New Partner Academy</b></p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective Communication &amp; Feedback</li> <li>- Journey in Big Law</li> <li>- Adding Value Through Career Planning</li> </ul>

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## External Coach Perspective: LeadWise Group Coaching Engagements

### Business Development Coaching

- **Challenge:** Integrating business development into daily practice
- **Focus:** Habit-building, mindset shifts, and accountability
- **Results:** Stronger client relationships, strengthened BD confidence, increased cross-selling/collaboration, improved partner retention

### People & Practice Management Coaching

- **Challenge:** Balancing work without burnout; partners are not delegating enough; unclear expectations
- **Focus:** People and practice management skills (delegation, feedback, strategic planning, productivity, etc)
- **Results:** Increased efficiency, stronger leadership, and better retention

### Leadership Development for Law Firm Leaders

- **Challenge:** Leaders are expected to drive firm success, but lack key leadership skills
- **Focus:** Coaching program focused on exploring Leader Identity, developing Leadership Impact, and strengthening Strategic Thinking skills
- **Results:** More confident, effective leaders who improve firm performance, engagement, retention, and long-term growth

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## Designing a Coaching Initiative at Your Firm



### Step 1: Design Your Coaching Initiative (Interactive Exercise)

- Let's identify and design one small, actionable coaching initiative for your firm!
- Brainstorm and discuss at your tables.
- Share with the main group.



### Step 2: Gain Leadership Buy-In for Your Initiative

- Frame coaching as an investment, not a cost by connecting coaching to firm-wide goals (strategic plan, retention, BD growth, leadership pipeline).
- Consider starting with a low-risk pilot involving a small, focused group.
- Use data & feedback to refine before scaling.



### Step 3: Scale & Sustain Coaching

- Start small by integrating coaching concepts and tools, then expand, gradually integrating a coaching program or additional coaching tools firmwide
- Leverage internal & external resources with a mix of structured programs, informal coaching, and technology
- Regularly measure impact, using feedback loops, surveys, and key metrics

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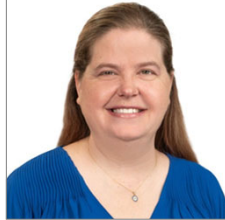
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## Thank you!



**Yuliya LaRoe, JD, MBA, PCC**  
Law Firm Consultant &  
Certified Coach  
CEO at LeadWise Group, Inc  
+1 (305) 204-0751  
[YLaRoe@leadwisegroup.com](mailto:YLaRoe@leadwisegroup.com)



**Laura Yerhot, MPP, MBA, ACC**  
Career Coaching & Planning  
Manager  
Troutman Pepper Locke, LLP  
+1 (202) 274-2891  
[Laura.Yerhot@troutman.com](mailto:Laura.Yerhot@troutman.com)



**Christie Mizer, JD, CPCC**  
Director of Professional Development &  
Coaching  
Beveridge & Diamond, PC  
+1 (202) 789-6121  
[CMizer@bdlaw.com](mailto:CMizer@bdlaw.com)

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# Engagement 2.0: Why Coaching Beats Perks Every Time

## Action Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Takeaway

My key insight from this session is:

### Continued Learning & Networking

I will connect with \_\_\_\_\_ after this session to further explore my key takeaway.

From that conversation, I hope to gain:

### Implementing Coaching for Engagement

I will apply the following three coaching-driven approaches to enhance engagement in my firm/team:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Expected Impact

These techniques will deliver the following benefits to my firm, my team, and/or myself:

### Accountability Commitment

To stay accountable, I will:

- Share my commitment with \_\_\_\_\_ (a peer, mentor, or leader).
- Schedule a check-in by \_\_\_\_\_ to review my progress.
- Track my application of these techniques by \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., journaling, team feedback, coaching logs).

# Coaching Skills to Increase Employee Engagement



## Asking Powerful Questions:

- Asking, not telling, is the cornerstone of coaching
- Lead with curiosity and ask open-ended questions

**Open Ended Questions** are inquiries that prompt a response beyond a simple “yes” or “no” answer. These questions encourage detailed and thoughtful replies, requiring the respondent to elaborate on their thoughts, feelings, or experiences.

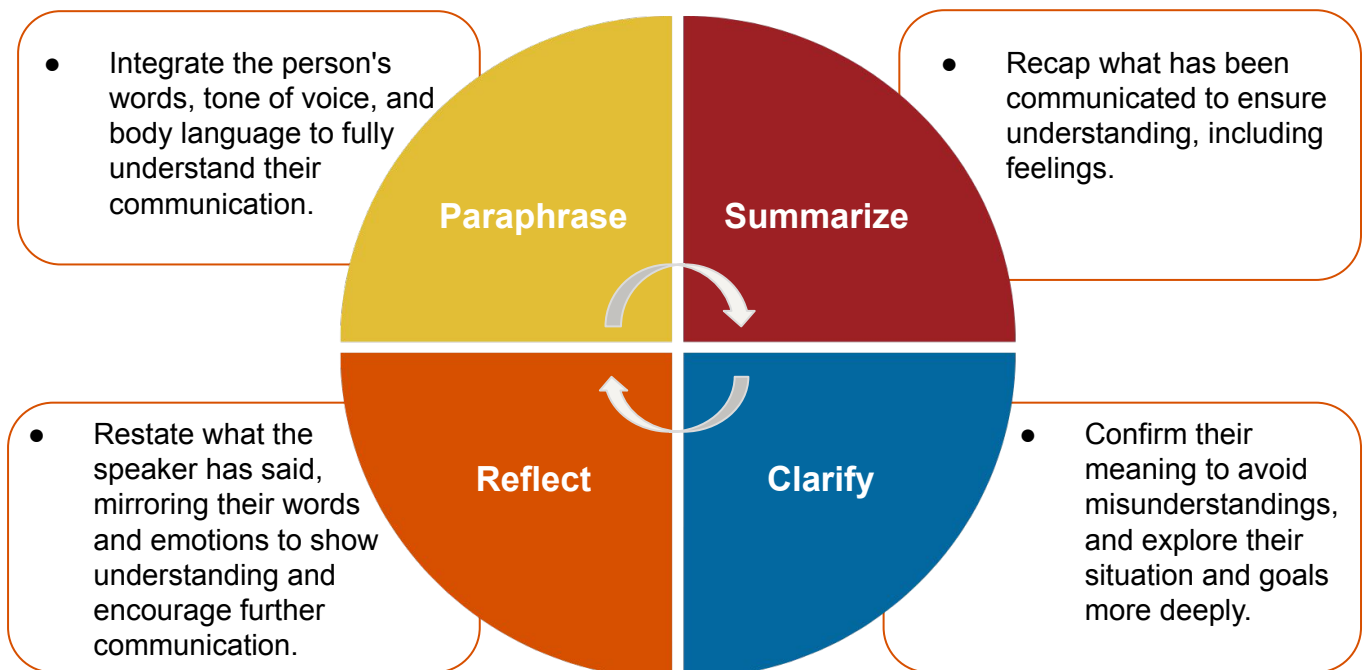
**Words that open up conversations:**

- *What*
- *Who*
- *When*
- *How*

Telling	Asking
This is what you need to do.	How could you proceed?
The best thing would be....	What do you think is best?
You should have done XYZ.	If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?
There are not a lot of options.	What is possible?
ABC can solve this for you	Who could best support you?



## Improving your active listening



# Coaching Skills That Can Be Leveraged to Increase Employee Engagement



## Asking Powerful Questions:

- Asking, not telling, is the cornerstone of coaching
- Lead with curiosity and ask open-ended questions

**Open Ended Questions** are inquiries that prompt a response beyond a simple “yes” or “no” answer. These questions encourage detailed and thoughtful replies, requiring the respondent to elaborate on their thoughts, feelings, or experiences.

### Examples:

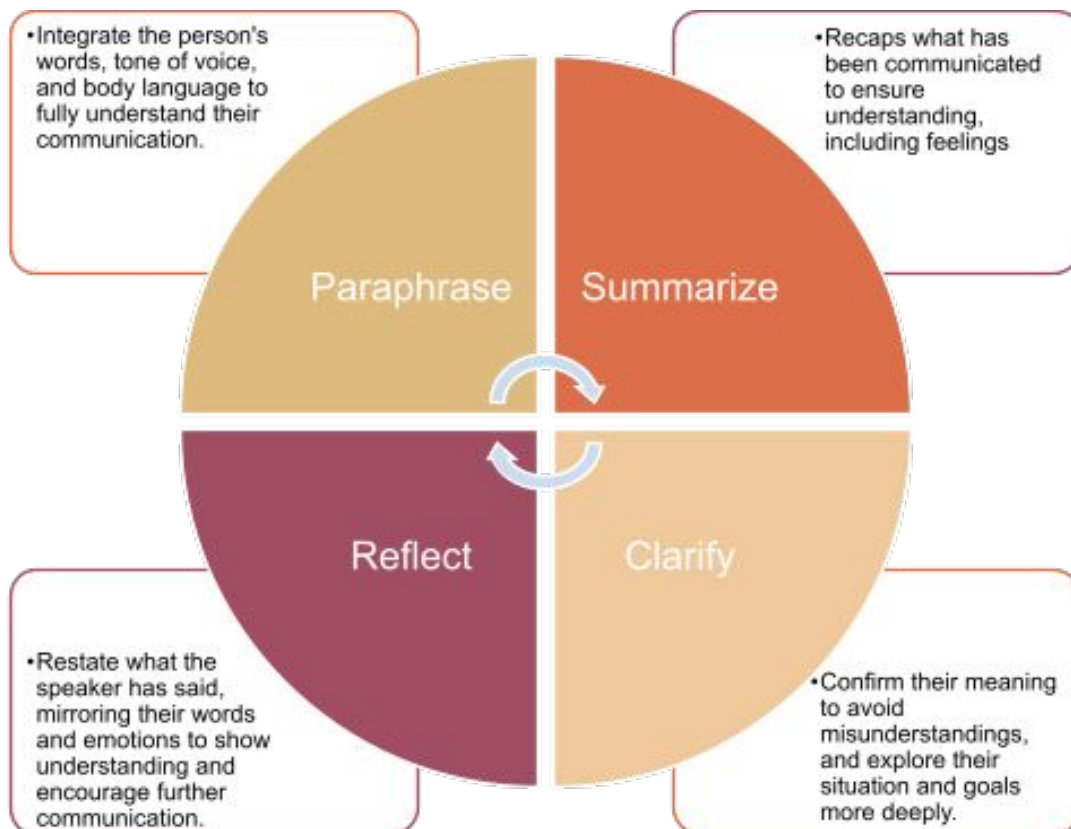
**Words that lend themselves toward conversations:**

- *What*
- *Who*
- *When*
- *How*

Telling	Asking
This is what you need to do.	How can I help?
The best thing would be....	What do you think is best?
You should have done XYZ.	If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?
There are not a lot of options.	What is possible?
ABC can solve this for you	Who could best support you?



## Improving your active listening



# Engagement 2.0: Why Coaching Beats Perks Every Time

## Action Plan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

**My key takeaway from this session is:**

**I will network with \_\_\_\_\_ after this session to continue to explore my key takeaway. From that conversation I hope to gain:**

**I will implement the following three coaching techniques to increase engagement:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**These techniques will deliver the following benefits to my firm, my team, and/or myself:**

LEADWISE GUIDE TO  
**LEADING GROUP COACHING  
MEETINGS FOR LAWYERS**



**BY YULIYA LAROE, JD, MBA**

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## Introduction

Group coaching can be a powerful way to help others grow, but it's different from mentoring or counseling. Most lawyers naturally gravitate toward providing answers, but group coaching is more about helping participants discover their own insights. It's not about the coach having all the answers—it's about creating a space for others to learn from themselves and each other.

Here's a short guide to help you lead effective group coaching meetings. While not comprehensive, this Guide will help get a better sense of what group coaching is and how to structure and lead your first group coaching meeting.

## What Is Group Coaching?

Group coaching is a collaborative experience where participants learn through exploration, reflection, and interaction with the coach and each other. The main goal of coaching, including group coaching, is to help participants resolve issues or challenges and move forward in accomplishing their goals.

Unlike mentoring, where the mentor shares their expertise, or counseling, which may focus on personal challenges, group coaching encourages participants to reflect, share, and grow together.

The coach's role in group coaching is to facilitate, listen actively, and ask questions that stimulate group learning—not to lecture or provide direct solutions. It's about creating a supportive environment where participants feel comfortable exploring their thoughts and ideas. Of course, the coach may also share ideas and solutions, but only after the participants have had an opportunity to explore their own insights and after the group has offered their perspectives.



# Practical Steps to Lead Effective Group Coaching Meetings

## 1. Set the Tone

- Begin by welcoming everyone and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Emphasize that this is a space for shared learning, and encourage open, honest dialogue.
- Establish some ground rules—confidentiality, respect, and giving space for everyone to speak. You could also ask participants if there are any additional ground rules they would like to include, which helps foster ownership of the process.

## 2. Adopt a Curious Mindset

- Instead of sharing advice or talking about your own experiences, focus on asking open-ended questions. Questions like "What stands out to you about this challenge?" or "What might you try differently next time?" can help participants reflect and find their own insights.
- Practice active listening. This means giving your full attention to the speaker, nodding to show you're engaged, and summarizing what you've heard before moving on. For example, "This sounds like a really frustrating situation."
- Avoid the urge to jump in and provide solutions. Practice listening without thinking about your response. When tempted to give advice, instead try asking, "What other approaches could you consider?" or "How do you think that would work in your situation?"

## 3. Facilitate, Don't Direct

- Your role is to guide the conversation, not dominate it. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak, but let participants lead the discussion as much as possible. This helps them take ownership of their learning.
- Encourage quieter members by asking them specifically for their thoughts. For instance, "I'd love to hear your perspective on this, Sarah." It can be helpful to frame it as an invitation rather than putting someone on the spot. For example, "Sarah, if you're comfortable, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this."
- Use follow-up questions to deepen the discussion, such as, "Can you tell us more about that?" or "How did that make you feel?" These questions help participants reflect more deeply and share more meaningful insights.

#### 4. Handle Challenges

- If a participant becomes too dominant, gently redirect: “Thanks for sharing, John. Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.” This ensures everyone’s voice is heard and prevents the conversation from being monopolized.
- If the conversation goes off track, acknowledge the value of the point but steer back: “That’s an interesting point. Let’s bring it back to our original topic for now.” You can also use phrases like, “Let’s put a pin in that and come back if we have time.”
- If someone is resistant or skeptical, validate their perspective: “I understand this might feel different or challenging. What’s one small thing you could try to see if it works for you?”

## Sample Outline for a Group Coaching Meeting (60-90 Minutes)

### 1. Welcome and Set the Context (5 Minutes)

- Greet everyone warmly and set ground rules (e.g., confidentiality, respect).
- Share the topic or theme for the session (e.g., dealing with challenging clients, improving team communication).
- Explain that group coaching is about shared learning, and everyone’s contributions are valuable.

### 2. Goal-setting & Accountability (10 Minutes)

- Go around the group and ask participants about their goal for the meeting (e.g., “What would make this meeting most productive for you?” or “What do you want to take away from today’s discussion?”).
- If this is not your first meeting, ask participants to provide a brief update on the progress they made toward a goal discussed during the previous meeting (e.g., “What progress have you made toward your goal since our last meeting?”).
- Encourage participants to be specific about their goals. Ideally, each will come prepared to the meeting with a clear goal in mind (so it’s best to communicate this expectation ahead of the meeting).

### 3. Group Discussion (30-45 Minutes)

- Present a prompt or question related to the session's theme. For example, "What's been your biggest challenge with client management lately?" or "What's something you wish you could do differently in your practice?"
- Use open-ended questions to deepen the discussion (e.g., "What are some possible approaches to this issue?" or "What's holding you back from trying something new?").
- Let participants share, discuss, and explore different perspectives. Encourage them to ask questions of each other. For example, "Does anyone else have a similar experience?" or "How do others see this situation?"
- Add or contribute your ideas as needed.

### 4. Reflection and Key Takeaways (10-15 Minutes)

- Ask participants to reflect on what they've learned or what they'll do differently as a result of the discussion. You could ask, "What's one insight you're taking away from today?" or "How might you apply what you learned today in your work?"

### 5. Wrap-Up, Action Planning, and Next Steps (5-10 Minutes)

- Summarize key themes from the discussion. You might say, "It sounds like a common theme today was finding balance in client expectations."
- Help each participant identify specific actions they will commit to executing before the next meeting: "What's one action you'll take based on today's conversation?" or "Who could you reach out to for support with this?"
- Set the date or theme for the next session. You could ask for suggestions: "What would be a helpful topic for our next session?"
- Thank everyone for their contributions, and emphasize the value of their participation in making the session meaningful.

## Tips for Success

- **Embrace Silence:** Pauses are okay! Silence often means people are thinking. Give participants time to reflect before jumping in. You can say, “Let’s take a moment to think about that,” to make the pause intentional.
- **Avoid Over-Talking:** Give participants space to share without feeling rushed or overpowered. A good rule of thumb is to wait a few seconds after someone stops talking before you respond.
- **Keep It Practical:** Group coaching is most impactful when participants can tie the discussion back to their real experiences. Keep asking questions that help them connect ideas to their daily work, such as, “How does this relate to what you’re currently facing?” or “What’s one small step you can take to apply this?”
- **Be Patient with the Process:** Group coaching is about gradual growth. Participants may not have immediate breakthroughs, but over time, the discussions will foster deeper understanding and self-awareness.

Leading a group coaching meeting may feel different at first, especially if you’re used to giving advice, but the rewards are in seeing participants grow through their own realizations. Stick with it, and you’ll see how powerful this approach can be.

## Group Coaching Programs from LeadWise

Leadership, management, and business development are essential skills for lawyers, yet many professionals find it challenging to cultivate these areas effectively.

At LeadWise, we lead dynamic group coaching programs on leadership, management, and business development specifically designed for lawyers. These structured programs foster a collaborative environment where participants learn from each other, grow their skills, and build lasting relationships—all while gaining practical tools they can apply immediately.

Imagine a firm where your leaders thrive, your managers inspire, and business development becomes second nature. Invest in group coaching to unlock the potential of your people.

To get in touch with us, contact:

**Yuliya LaRoe, JD, MBA, PCC**

*Law Firm Consultant, Trainer & Certified Coach*

Founder & CEO | LeadWise Group

**email:** [ylaroe@leadwisegroup.com](mailto:ylaroe@leadwisegroup.com)

**phone:** +1 (305) 204-0751

**web:** [leadwisegroup.com](http://leadwisegroup.com)

**linkedin:** [linkedin.com/in/yuliyalaroe/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yuliyalaroe/)

## About LeadWise Group

LeadWise is an award-winning consulting and coaching firm with 20+ years of experience in the legal and professional services industry. We help firms unlock the full potential of their people by designing strategies and solutions to:

- **Attract & Retain Top Talent:** Clear career paths, premier development programs, and firm cultures that drive long-term success.
- **Develop Strong Leaders:** Equipping practice and firm leaders to set direction, drive growth, and lead with impact.
- **Boost Productivity & Performance:** Smarter people and practice management, stronger delegation, and seamless cross-team collaboration.
- **Transform Professionals into RainMasters:** Proven rainmaking strategies that help professionals build confidence, consistency, and business development results.

# LEADWISE GUIDE TO **MOTIVATING & ENGAGING YOUR TEAM**



**BY YULIYA LAROE, JD, MBA**

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## Introduction

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Motivation is the fuel that drives performance, engagement, and long-term success. In every organization, leaders are tasked with keeping their teams inspired, but true motivation is not a one-size-fits-all concept. What energizes one person may leave another feeling disconnected. This is why understanding the core drivers of motivation and engagement is essential for leaders who want to cultivate high-performing, fulfilled teams.

At LeadWise, we've worked with countless professionals across industries—law firms, corporate teams, and high-growth companies—and one thing remains consistent: engaged employees do better work, stay longer, and contribute more meaningfully to the success of their organizations. However, motivation doesn't just happen. It must be intentionally cultivated through leadership, culture, and recognition that resonates with individuals on a deeper level.

***“Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customers.”***

***— Stephen R. Covey***

This guide will help you understand the key factors that influence motivation and engagement. More importantly, it will provide you with actionable strategies to create an environment where your team can thrive. Whether you're a managing partner, team leader, or executive, this is your roadmap to unlocking the full potential of your people.

# What Motivates People in the Workplace

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Understanding what truly motivates employees is critical for **engagement, retention, and high performance**.

Based on extensive research in motivation theory—[Self-Determination Theory](#), [Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory](#), [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#), and modern workplace studies—the **top five** elements that have the greatest impact on employee motivation are:

1. Autonomy & Control
2. Purpose & Meaning
3. Growth & Development
4. Recognition & Appreciation
5. Supportive Firm Culture



# 1. Autonomy & Control



Employees are more motivated when they have a **sense of control** over their work. This doesn't mean a lack of structure; rather, it means providing **flexibility within clear expectations**. Employees who have the ability to make decisions about how, when, and where they complete their work experience higher engagement and productivity.

Additionally, **autonomy enhances creative problem-solving**, as employees who feel trusted are more likely to take initiative and develop innovative solutions rather than defaulting to risk-averse behaviors due to fear of micromanagement.

## Practical Application:

- Define the 'what' and the 'why' but let employees decide the 'how'—give them the freedom to approach tasks in a way that suits their strengths and working style.
- Implement structured delegation by giving employees ownership of projects rather than just assigning tasks; for example, have them lead client updates or internal presentations.
- Allow team members to create their own workflows, schedules, and methods for completing non-time-sensitive work, reinforcing trust and accountability.
- Use a 'freedom within a framework' approach—set clear expectations but let employees choose how to meet them, such as structuring client deliverables or managing stakeholder communications.
- Conduct quarterly 'autonomy check-ins' to assess whether employees feel trusted and empowered or micromanaged, and adjust management approaches accordingly.

Trust and empowerment drive performance, while micromanagement kills motivation. Leaders should focus on setting clear goals and providing necessary resources while allowing employees to determine the best way to achieve results.

## 2. Purpose & Meaning in Work

Employees need to see how their work contributes to a bigger goal. **Connecting daily tasks to the broader mission of the organization** fosters deeper engagement. People are far more likely to remain motivated when they believe their efforts are making a tangible difference, whether in clients' lives, the firm's success, or societal impact.

When employees lack a clear sense of purpose, their work can feel transactional rather than meaningful. **Purpose-driven employees are more resilient** in the face of challenges, as they see their work as contributing to something greater rather than simply fulfilling a set of responsibilities.



### Practical Application:

- Regularly connect day-to-day work to the company's larger impact; for example, in legal teams, show how diligence in contract negotiations protects long-term business stability.
- Make mission alignment part of performance reviews—ask employees how they see their role contributing to the firm's long-term success and discuss ways to deepen that connection.
- Highlight real examples of how an employee's work directly influenced a client outcome, company strategy, or market position.
- Encourage employees to engage with different functions (e.g., finance, marketing, product development) to see how their work fits into the bigger picture.
- Assign 'impact mentors'—leaders or senior colleagues who can provide insights into how an individual's work has shaped business outcomes, industry influence, or social good.

Aligning work with personal values also boosts intrinsic motivation. Communicating how each role contributes to the firm or company's mission, ensuring employees see the impact of their contributions.

### 3. Growth & Development Opportunities



Employees stay motivated when they see a **clear path for growth and development**. This includes skill-building, mentorship, and opportunities to take on new challenges. Growth doesn't always mean promotion; lateral moves, exposure to new areas, or skill diversification can be just as valuable. A well-structured development program signals to employees that the organization is invested in their success, leading to increased loyalty and motivation.

On the other hand, employees who feel their roles have become **stagnant or see no upward mobility are more likely to disengage**.

#### Practical Application:

- Establish a 'growth challenge' initiative where employees can select a professional stretch goal every six months, with leadership support and resources to help them achieve it.
- Rotate employees into different cross-functional projects so they gain exposure beyond their immediate responsibilities and avoid stagnation.
- Make leadership shadowing a standard part of development—allow employees to sit in on executive strategy meetings or high-level client discussions to gain business insight.
- Create 'micro-promotion' opportunities—small, incremental advancements (e.g., leading a project team, presenting to leadership) that build leadership readiness before formal promotions.
- Encourage employees to propose new initiatives or solutions to business challenges and provide structured feedback to refine their strategic thinking.

**Lack of growth opportunities is a top reason for disengagement and turnover.** Providing meaningful challenges that stretch your team members' abilities while remaining achievable keeps them engaged and fosters long-term retention. Leaders should proactively offer training and career mapping to ensure employees see a future within the organization.

## 4. Recognition & Appreciation

Employees thrive when they feel **valued and acknowledged**. Recognition should be timely, specific, and meaningful. A lack of appreciation can lead to disengagement, even for high performers. Employees who feel invisible or taken for granted are less likely to go above and beyond.

The key to impactful recognition is **personalization**—what motivates one employee may not resonate with another. Some employees value public praise, while others prefer private acknowledgment or professional growth opportunities.



### Practical Application:

- Tie recognition to business impact—rather than just saying “good job,” specify how an employee’s work drove revenue, improved efficiency, or strengthened client relationships.
- Personalize appreciation—some employees value public recognition, while others prefer a personal note or one-on-one acknowledgment.
- Implement an ‘appreciation loop’ where peers can submit examples of colleagues who went above and beyond, and leaders highlight these contributions in meetings.
- Celebrate milestones beyond traditional work achievements—recognize an employee’s five-year impact on the organization, their mentorship contributions, or their role in fostering company culture.
- Give meaningful, role-specific rewards—such as allowing a high-performing associate to co-lead a client pitch or offering an operations manager direct involvement in strategic decision-making.

A culture of recognition must go beyond annual performance reviews and integrate **frequent, meaningful acknowledgments throughout the year**. Recognition **doesn’t always have to be monetary**; public acknowledgment, handwritten notes, and career advancement opportunities are equally powerful. The key is to make recognition **consistent and aligned with meaningful contributions**.

## 5. Supportive Leadership & Inclusive Culture



**Trust, psychological safety, and an inclusive work culture** are crucial for motivation and innovation. Employees perform best when they feel safe to voice opinions, take risks, and ask for help without fear of judgment or retribution. A supportive leader fosters **open communication, constructive feedback,** and a **culture of continuous learning.**

Leaders who **prioritize employee well-being and professional growth** create an environment where employees feel valued and empowered.

### Practical Application:

- Normalize asking for help by sharing your own leadership challenges and how you navigated them, creating a culture where seeking guidance is seen as a strength.
- Build psychological safety by encouraging dissenting opinions and constructive debate—actively reward employees who challenge ideas and bring new perspectives.
- Establish ‘failure learning forums’ where teams analyze setbacks, extract lessons, and refine approaches rather than assigning blame.
- Proactively identify potential burnout by tracking workload distribution, engagement levels, and frequent late-night work patterns, then intervene with support.
- Recognize that leadership behavior sets the tone—demonstrate accountability, curiosity, and resilience in your own work to inspire the same in your team.

Beyond direct management, a workplace that **encourages collaboration over competition** helps retain top talent and sustain high levels of motivation.

**A toxic or overly competitive culture diminishes motivation.** Leaders should focus on creating a collaborative, inclusive, and psychologically safe environment where employees can do their best work.

## Understanding Motivation: We Are Not All the Same

Motivation is not a one-size-fits-all concept. What excites and energizes one person may feel uninspiring to another. Understanding what drives you is the first step in becoming a better leader. But equally important is recognizing that your team members may have entirely different motivators than you. The best leaders create an environment where a variety of motivational drivers are supported, allowing each individual to thrive in their own way.

### What Drives You?

Motivation is deeply personal. What excites and energizes one person may feel uninspiring to another. Consider the following list of common motivators. **Which of these speaks to you the most?** Take a moment to reflect on what fuels your energy, focus, and engagement.

Taking on new challenges	Taking the lead on a project	Working on team projects	Taking risks
Solving problems	Making steady progress	Helping others succeed	Being the expert on a project
Knowing I make other people happy	Being able to express myself	Getting closure on projects	Getting concrete results
Meeting new people	Getting public praise for a job well done	Doing a high-quality job	Having freedom to do things my way

### Motivation is Not One-Size-Fits-All

As managers and leaders, our job is to create an environment where others can thrive. However, we often assume that what motivates us will also motivate our team. If you love solving complex problems, you might assume that challenging assignments will energize everyone. If public praise fuels you, you may believe that recognition in front of the team is universally appreciated. But what if someone else is more motivated by making steady progress and dislikes the spotlight?

Unintentional bias in motivation can lead to disengagement. If a leader constantly pushes team members to take risks, but their strongest motivators are getting closure on projects and making steady progress, that leader may inadvertently create stress rather than excitement. Similarly, an employee who thrives on collaboration may struggle in an environment that emphasizes independence and autonomy.

## How to Adapt Your Leadership Approach

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Understanding that people are motivated differently is just the first step—what truly matters is how you adjust your leadership style to support those differences. As a leader, it's easy to default to what motivates you, but real engagement comes from recognizing and responding to what drives each individual on your team. By taking a more personalized approach, you create an environment where every team member feels valued, energized, and empowered to do their best work.

The following strategies will help you lead with flexibility and intention, ensuring that motivation is not just a personal experience, but a team-wide advantage.

1. **Uncover Motivation Preferences:** Instead of assuming, ask. Observe how your team responds to different tasks and situations. Conduct one-on-one conversations to understand what drives each individual. A simple question like, "What type of work makes you feel the most engaged and energized?" can reveal valuable insights. Additionally, using tools like the [DiSC assessment](#) can help you and your team better understand personality styles and natural motivation drivers, allowing for more personalized leadership approaches.
2. **Offer Flexible Pathways:** Not everyone is motivated by leadership or risk-taking. Some employees may prefer becoming subject-matter experts rather than managing people. Others may find joy in refining processes rather than launching new initiatives. Recognizing different paths to success helps retain top talent.
3. **Diversify Recognition and Rewards:** Praise and incentives should be tailored. If someone values concrete results, highlight their direct impact on business outcomes. If someone thrives on collaboration, acknowledge their contributions to teamwork. Personalizing appreciation increases its effectiveness. More on recognition and rewards on the following pages.
4. **Challenge Your Own Assumptions:** Notice when you default to your own motivators in decision-making. If you value autonomy, you might assume hands-off management is ideal for everyone. But some employees feel more engaged with structured guidance. Adjust your leadership style accordingly.
5. **Create a Motivation-Rich Environment:** Teams flourish when a variety of motivators are supported. Ensure a balance between independent work and collaboration, strategic problem-solving and process execution, and risk-taking and stability. This way, everyone has an opportunity to work in a way that energizes them.



Key takeaway here? **Great leaders don't just manage—they cultivate motivation.** By recognizing and respecting individual differences in what drives engagement, you can build a more productive, satisfied, and high-performing team.

## How DiSC Styles Impact Motivation & Engagement

People are motivated by different things, and their natural tendencies play a big role in what energizes or drains them at work. The DiSC personality model helps us understand these differences by categorizing individuals into four primary styles—D (Dominance), i (Influence), S (Steadiness), and C (Conscientiousness). Each style is driven by unique motivators and discouraged by specific challenges.

As a leader, recognizing these variations allows you to create a work environment that aligns with what your team members find fulfilling, ensuring that motivation remains high. Use the insights in the table below to tailor your approach, setting up each person for success in a way that resonates with them.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>D Style</b></p> <p><b>Motivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Achieving results</li> </ul> <p><b>Demotivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing routine or repetitive tasks</li> <li>• Slow pace</li> <li>• Being under tight supervision</li> <li>• Having their authority questioned or overruled</li> <li>• Feeling like their time is being wasted</li> <li>• Having to wade through a lot of details</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>i Style</b></p> <p><b>Motivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public recognition</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• High-energy, fun, excitement</li> </ul> <p><b>Demotivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being isolated</li> <li>• Working in a reserved, slow-paced setting</li> <li>• Having their contributions go unrecognized</li> <li>• Performing routine or repetitive tasks</li> <li>• Wading through a lot of details</li> <li>• Working with pessimistic or critical people</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S Style</b></p> <p><b>Motivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stability, structure</li> <li>• Genuine appreciation</li> <li>• Connection and purpose</li> </ul> <p><b>Demotivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive environments</li> <li>• Having to change direction abruptly</li> <li>• Being rushed into quick decisions</li> <li>• Dealing with cold or argumentative people</li> <li>• Being forced to improvise</li> <li>• Being in chaotic situations</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C Style</b></p> <p><b>Motivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations</li> <li>• Logic, rationale</li> <li>• Expertise</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> </ul> <p><b>Demotivated by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being required to work collaboratively</li> <li>• Receiving vague or ambiguous directions</li> <li>• Having to deal with strong displays of emotion</li> <li>• Being forced to let errors slide</li> <li>• Having to make quick decisions</li> <li>• Being wrong</li> </ul>

## Recognition Strategies by DiSC Style

Recognition is a powerful motivator, but one size does not fit all. While some employees thrive on public praise, others may find it uncomfortable or even discouraging. The key to effective recognition is tailoring it to the individual's preferences and personality style.

By leveraging the DiSC framework, you can ensure that your recognition efforts are meaningful and impactful. The table below outlines the best ways to acknowledge and appreciate team members based on their DiSC style, helping you reinforce positive behaviors in a way that resonates with each person.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>D Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Public and clear acknowledgment</b> of their contributions and achievements.</li> <li>● <b>Tied to results</b> – recognition should highlight their impact and measurable success.</li> <li>● <b>Direct and to the point</b> – avoid overly emotional praise, focus on what they did well.</li> <li>● <b>Opportunities for advancement or leadership</b> can be the best form of recognition.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>i Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Energetic and personal praise</b> – enthusiasm matters as much as the words.</li> <li>● <b>Public recognition in front of peers</b> or in a group setting is especially meaningful.</li> <li>● <b>Engagement and interaction</b> – celebrate their achievements with social events or fun acknowledgments.</li> <li>● <b>Frequent and spontaneous recognition</b>, not just formal acknowledgments.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Private or small-group recognition</b> – they appreciate sincerity over public displays.</li> <li>● <b>Emphasize their reliability and contributions to team</b> harmony and support.</li> <li>● <b>Personal and heartfelt appreciation</b> – a thoughtful note or one-on-one conversation is ideal.</li> <li>● <b>Consistency matters</b> – steady, ongoing appreciation rather than one big recognition moment.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Recognition should be specific and fact-based</b> – highlight the quality of their work.</li> <li>● <b>Private or written acknowledgment</b> is often preferred over public praise.</li> <li>● <b>Respect for their expertise</b> – acknowledging their depth of knowledge is a strong motivator.</li> <li>● <b>Opportunities for professional growth</b> (e.g., certifications, challenging projects) can be a meaningful.</li> </ul>

## Rewards & Gifts by DiSC Style

When it comes to rewards and incentives, what excites one person may leave another indifferent. Some employees appreciate experiential rewards, while others value practical gifts or opportunities for professional growth. By considering an individual's DiSC style, you can ensure that your rewards are both meaningful and motivating.

The table below offers guidance on selecting rewards that align with different personality types, helping you maximize engagement and reinforce the behaviors and contributions you value most.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>D Style</b></p> <p><b>Rewards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical &amp; goal-driven</li> <li>• Ask directly what they would find useful</li> </ul> <p><b>Gift Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Practical, goal-oriented</b>—tech gadgets, high-quality work tools, or professional coaching.</li> <li>• <b>Exclusive experiences</b>—VIP event access, executive networking opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Time-saving</b>—subscriptions, productivity tools, or luxury convenience items.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>i Style</b></p> <p><b>Rewards/Gifts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social &amp; enthusiastic</li> <li>• They love exciting, interactive experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Gift Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Experiential gifts</b>—concert tickets, event passes, adventure activities.</li> <li>• <b>Social-friendly rewards</b>—team lunch, or happy hour.</li> <li>• <b>Personalized, fun surprises</b>—custom swag, creative desk decor, or hobby-related gifts.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S Style</b></p> <p><b>Rewards/Gifts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtful &amp; relationship-oriented</li> <li>• Listen for their personal interests and preferences</li> </ul> <p><b>Gift Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personalized, thoughtful gifts</b>—handwritten notes, a book on a favorite topic, or meaningful keepsakes.</li> <li>• <b>Wellness-related gifts</b>—spa vouchers, cozy office accessories, or relaxation experiences.</li> <li>• <b>Quality time rewards</b>—lunch with a mentor, 1:1 appreciation meeting.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>C Style</b></p> <p><b>Rewards/Gifts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytical &amp; detail-focused</li> <li>• Functional gifts that serve a specific purpose are ideal</li> </ul> <p><b>Gift Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intellectual gifts</b>—books, learning materials, online courses.</li> <li>• <b>Functional, high-quality tools</b>—premium notebooks, digital organizers, ergonomic office accessories.</li> <li>• <b>Solo-experience rewards</b>—quiet retreat, museum passes, or an educational subscription.</li> </ul>

## Turning Insight into Action

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Understanding motivation is just the beginning—real impact happens when you apply these insights to how you lead and develop your people.

Now that you have a framework for creating a more engaged and motivated team, ask yourself:


- What small change can I implement today?
- How can I start tailoring my leadership approach to better align with what truly drives my team members?
- How can I create an environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to contribute their best work?

At LeadWise, **we specialize in helping organizations translate these concepts into real-world results.** Whether you're looking to enhance leadership development, improve team collaboration, or create a more engaging workplace culture, we offer expert training and consulting to help you achieve your goals.

**Ready to take the next step?** Let's talk about how we can help you build a high-performing, motivated team.

 **Get in Touch:** [support@leadwisegroup.com](mailto:support@leadwisegroup.com)

 **Learn More:** [leadwisegroup.com](https://leadwisegroup.com)

 **Call Us:** (305) 204-0751

**Your employee's motivation isn't just about what they do—it's about how they feel.** When you invest in creating a workplace where people feel valued, supported, and inspired, you don't just improve performance—you build a culture where people want to stay and succeed. Let's build that future together.

## About LeadWise Group

LeadWise is an award-winning consulting and coaching firm with 20+ years of experience in the legal and professional services industry. We help firms unlock the full potential of their people by designing strategies and solutions to:

- **Attract & Retain Top Talent:** Clear career paths, premier development programs, and firm cultures that drive long-term success.
- **Develop Strong Leaders:** Equipping practice and firm leaders to set direction, drive growth, and lead with impact.
- **Boost Productivity & Performance:** Smarter people and practice management, stronger delegation, and seamless cross-firm collaboration.
- **Transform Professionals into RainMasters:** Proven rainmaking strategies that help professionals build confidence, consistency, and business development results.

## About Yuliya LaRoe

**Yuliya (“YOO-lee-uh”) LaRoe** is a trusted advisor to law firms and professional services firms, helping them turn their talent into a competitive advantage for the firm. She is the founder and CEO of LeadWise Group, an award-winning strategic talent development consulting firm for the professional services industry.

As a consultant, executive coach, and former BigLaw attorney, Yuliya works with firm leaders to tackle the challenges that impact retention, performance, and growth—ensuring their people have the skills, structure, and support to excel.

For over 20 years, Yuliya has combined her legal expertise and business acumen to coach thousands of lawyers and leaders to achieve exceptional results. From navigating the path to equity partnership to building million-dollar books of business, her clients consistently turn ambition into measurable outcomes.

Leveraging her unique background as a practicing attorney and her MBA from Boston University Questrom School of Business, Yuliya brings advanced business strategy and leadership insights to help law firm leaders tackle complex challenges, drive transformation, and achieve sustainable success in today’s legal industry.

### **Yuliya LaRoe, JD, MBA, PCC**

*Law Firm Consultant, Trainer & Certified Coach*

Founder & CEO | LeadWise Group

**email:** ylaroe@leadwisegroup.com

**phone:** +1 (305) 204-0751

**web:** leadwisegroup.com

**linkedin:** linkedin.com/in/yuliyalaroe/