

Creating Your Power Plan

by Stephen Fairley

One of secrets of highly successful attorneys is that they make time to plan for the future. We recommend meeting at least once per quarter with your senior partners (even if you are the entire partnership) to evaluate achievements, set new goals and work on your law firm power plan for the next quarter.

I was recently coaching a partner in a small west coast law firm about their plans for this year when he said, *"I'm not sure I see a point in setting goals because everything seems to quickly conspire against us and we easily get so caught up in the day to day operations of the firm that we don't have time to focus on our goals. Then by the next time we meet, the priorities have all shifted."*

Perhaps you can relate. It's easy to set goals; the hard part is staying focused on them long enough to accomplish them.

Here are 4 tips for legal professionals for staying focused and achieving your goals:

1. **Ask someone to hold you accountable.** Accountability is key when it comes to keeping your commitments. Whether it's your firm partner, an attorney in a different firm, or one of our business coaches, set up a regular time to meet with someone you trust and who has your best interests at heart and request they keep you accountable. Simply knowing that they will ask you about your progress every week can make a big difference to a lot of people.
2. **Make sure they are S.M.A.R.T. goals.** This is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Timed. A good goal needs to incorporate all of these criteria. It is not sufficient to say "I want to be a millionaire." That statement may be measurable, but does not include time frames, it does not lay out a specific game plan for how you will accomplish this goal, and it may not be realistic for you at this point in time.

An example of a SMART goal is: *"I want to meet in person with a minimum of 4 different potential referral sources every month for the next 6 months and ask them to send me business."*

3. **Make your goals smaller.** While this may seem contradictory at first, we have found that sometimes setting a goal that's so big it feels unreachable actually kills your motivation. Break up your long-term goals into smaller ones that you can reach on a regular basis.

For example, gaining 50 new clients in the next 12 months may sound overwhelming, but this works out to about 1 per week. If you know that you convert 50% of prospects that come to your legal practice then you only need 2 new people to walk in your door per week in order to achieve your goal.

4. **Focus on the right goals.** Whenever I have a coaching client that goes more than 2 weeks without achieving the goal they set in their coaching session I start asking questions to determine if this is a goal they really feel passionate about. If there is no commitment to a particular goal it will be very difficult for most people to devote time to accomplishing it.

Before you commit time, energy and resource to a goal, make sure it is something you truly care about and that will make a noticeable difference in your practice.

Stephen Fairley is an international best-selling author of 10 books and 5 audio programs, including [Practice Made Perfect for Lawyers \(2005\)](#) and [Becoming a Rainmaker: Business Building Strategies for Lawyers](#). Stephen has spoken to thousands of attorneys at state and local bar associations on topics related to marketing strategies for solo practitioners and small law firms. Sign up to receive Stephen's report "Top 10 Mistakes Attorneys Make and How to Avoid Them" at www.rainmakerretreat.com