

Keeping Priorities in Order

Balancing All Aspects of the Family-Oriented Lawyer's Professional and Personal Life

Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Restructure, Retention, Promotion & Work/Life Balance

Written By Deborah Epstein Henry
378 pages
\$29.95, American Bar Association

Making the exception the rule ... that is the theme of Deborah Epstein Henry's *Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Restructure, Retention, Promotion & Work/Life Balance*. Increasingly, clients are demanding reasonable and predictable fees, while at the same time lawyers are seeking more work/life balance. The chapters unfold by illustrating the outdated infrastructure of the existing legal profession in our country, and exploring ways in which the profession can be reshaped and revamped.

Targeting lawyers and law firms alike, Henry leads her readers through a comprehensive road map to improving the professional legal environment and the personal lives of those who live in it. Each chapter begins with an anecdote illustrating her points and suggestions through personal experiences. Henry shares vignettes stemming from her family life, as well as professional engagements and observations. Each short story leads the reader into the theme of Henry's next point to be made.

The book is intended to guide legal employers in designing their businesses, and provide advice to lawyers and law students in outlining their career paths, while giving special attention to women. Part I sets the stage for the legal employer. Henry takes the reader through the factors underlying a changing legal profession, and she lays the groundwork for achieving success



in the future. Part II provides advice for lawyers and law students. This second half of the book gives more personal guidance for lawyers such as navigating parental leave, and re-entering the work force after an extended leave.

One particular topic in Part I pertains to the trend away from traditional billable hours to alternative fee variations. Henry created FACTS – an alternative methodology for approaching billable hours in the future. The acronym stands for Fixed Hours, Annualized, Core, Target and Shared Hours. It is a system intended to maximize profitability while allowing for a more flexible and desirable work schedule. Under FACTS, Henry

explains that firm lawyers will fit in to at least one of the five categories. For instance, there are a growing number of lawyers who would prefer to be “off call” in a manner similar to the way doctors rotate. This “shared hours” alternative enables lawyers to practice challenging work while maintaining more control over their personal lives. The “fixed hours” category addresses a common misinterpretation of the difference between “full-time” and “part-time.” Part-time status is a misnomer, and can result in unwanted, and unwarranted, stigmatization of lawyers seeking reduced hours. Part I explores additional topics including how to make flexible and reduced-hour schedules work, telecommuting, mentoring, and determining value, as well as extended leaves and the subsequent re-entry into the workforce.

As a working mother and lawyer, Henry focuses a significant portion of her work on addressing the professional and personal needs of women. In Part II, she provides a guide for finding the best working environment for women lawyers. The “cheat sheet” is a questionnaire that can be used to find and/or create a women-friendly workplace. It is intended to be used by women law students in their search for post-graduate employment, but it can also be used by employers as a checklist to determine whether they are recruiting and retaining the best legal talent. The cheat sheet was the brainchild of a 2006 forum co-sponsored by Henry's Flex-Time Lawyers LLC, and the New

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York City Bar Committee on Women in the Profession. The primary goal of the cheat sheet is to enable women attorneys and law students to create a blueprint for success. For lawyers choosing to leave the workplace for short or long-term reasons, such as childcare, Henry provides an at-home to-do list. This list includes tips such as keeping your bar membership active, maintaining a working knowledge of the law, volunteering and networking. Part II also highlights tips on the application and interview process for re-entry lawyers, time management, networking, productivity, and gender

and generational issues.

Henry is a national expert on finding and retaining legal talent, creating work/life balance, and accommodating the evolving needs of the legal profession. After beginning her legal career as law clerk followed by litigator, Henry founded Flex-Time Lawyers, LLC in the late 1990s. Flex-Time Lawyers provides consulting services to law firms, bar associations, and law students, among other groups and organizations. As a lawyer, professional, wife and mother of three young boys, Henry has first-hand experience on the delicate balance between professional and personal life.

Henry is a senior fellow and legal industry advisor to the “Hidden Brain Drain” Task Force for the Center for Work-Life Policy, and a liaison to the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession. For more information, visit www.lawandreorder.com. ■

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