

BOOK REVIEW

LAW & REORDER DELVES DEEPLY INTO WORKPLACE RESTRUCTURE AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

BY HOLLEE SCHWARTZ TEMPLE

Professor Temple directs the legal reasoning, research, and writing program at West Virginia University College of Law. Her book, Good Enough Is the New Perfect: Finding Happiness and Success in Modern Motherhood, will be published in April by Harlequin Nonfiction. She writes about work/life balance for the ABA Journal, and blogs at <http://thenewperfect.com>.

***Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Work/Life Balance, Retention, Promotion & Restructure* by Deborah Epstein Henry (American Bar Association, 2010).**

As a professor and work/life balance researcher who studies lawyers and happiness, I eagerly awaited the release of Deborah Epstein Henry's *Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Work/Life Balance, Retention, Promotion & Restructure*. Henry is a thought leader in the legal profession (she founded Flex-Time Lawyers in 1999), and because I've followed her work for years, I was excited to see the synthesis of her decade of work.

From the introduction alone, I was intrigued: Henry sees an "unprecedented opportunity" to empower all lawyers – not just women – to improve their working lives, and from the start she urges employers to revamp their traditional models and create new paradigms. Though Henry is known for her leadership in the work/life arena, *Law & Reorder* goes far beyond that issue – it delves deeply into workplace restructure and talent management, offering specific suggestions on how legal work can be performed more efficiently. She reports on trends and provides advice about the future of the profession, offering concrete suggestions on how to make the industry more productive, efficient, and profitable from the employer's standpoint – and more satisfying from the lawyer's lens.

One of Henry's consistent themes is that in order to effect change, all of the profession's key stakeholders must have a voice. In turn,

the book is broken into sections, with Part I directed to management at law firms and in-house legal departments and Part II geared toward lawyers, law students, and law school administrators.

In Part I, Henry engages in a deep analysis of the billable hour and why it no longer works. "One of the biggest problems with the billable hour," Henry writes, "is that it created a conflict of interest between clients and lawyers, penalizing productivity and efficiency while leaving clients with unpredictable fees." She then provides specific examples of the new models of practice that are emerging, from alternative fee firms to virtual firms to hybrid models. In Chapter 3, "The Large Law Firm of the Future," she takes on alternative fee models and their potential impact on work/life balance, as well as changes in staffing, recruiting, and compensation. The remainder of Part I focuses on work/life-related themes, from how lawyers can redesign their career paths, to ways to make legal organizations more women-friendly, to the business case for offering work/life balance to both male and female lawyers. (Reduced-hour lawyers are profitable – seems like a no-brainer to make it a universal option!) Further, Henry explains why competition to recruit and retain the best talent requires flexibility. She caps off Part I with a detailed discussion of how to make flexible and reduced-hour schedules work.

Part II contains eight chapters of "advice" that law students and their advisers will benefit from. Henry helps readers identify their major work/life goals (flexibility, predictability, reduced hours, and proximity of work are the big hitters), and then helps them determine career paths that align. She offers an entire chapter on navigating parental leave, taking on practical concerns such as the timing of pregnancy and how much leave to take. The chapters on succeeding as a reduced-hours attorney and re-entry for lawyers in transition stood out as offering detailed plans for lawyers in these difficult periods.

The final chapters will be of special interest to law students and those who work with them. In Chapter 18, "Blueprinting Women Law Students and Lawyers for Success," Henry offers readers a checklist of action steps (which includes advice-seeking and training) to ensure professional success. She encourages new lawyers to embrace an entrepreneurial spirit rather than waiting for senior lawyers to model the path. In the appendix to that chapter, Henry provides her brilliant Cheat Sheet, which allows job seekers to assess an employer's commitment to women's retention and advancement. Finally, the last chapters (on networking and business development for women and "sticky gender and generational issues among women") round out *Law & Reorder*.

The book is an invaluable, practical handbook, packed with checklists and concrete tips that employer representatives and law school administrators can and *should* implement. ■

Ed. note: Law and Reorder is available from the NALP online bookstore at www.nalp.org.

