

Invest 15 Minutes a Day in Your Career

By Thomas S. Clay

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Recently, I attended a law firm partner retreat and was struck, once again, by something that I believe impedes law firms from being innovative and thereby undermines their long-term sustainability.

After a significant discussion with the group, I made the following comment:

**"This group is singularly uninformed
about what is going on in their own profession
regarding law practice management, innovation and competitive issues!"**

This is not the first time I have made this observation to a group of lawyers. Fortunately, the partners at the meeting took it the right way, and asked:

"Well, what do you recommend?"

I told them that any lawyer should be able to invest 15 minutes a day in understanding important issues in the evolution of their profession and how these developments might affect them as individual lawyers, their practice, and the firm. This is simply an investment in your professional career and the continued sustainability of your firm. I told them to start small with a list of news sources they might want to look at each day to spawn discussion, discovery, strategies and the like.

Considering the rapid and expansive change in law practice over the last decade, a lawyer unwilling to make this minimal investment in his or her career, in my opinion, puts it in jeopardy. You can think of your billable hours as the income statement for your business, but you also must think of the assets on your balance sheet. You have made an enormous investment in your knowledge, skills, experience, client relationships, etc., but these assets can quickly depreciate if you don't continue to invest and evolve with the profession.

So, a simple thing to do today to get started would be to begin studying what is going on around you, with a forward-looking eye, and incorporate that into how you approach your practice, your career and your firm. You owe it to yourself.

Following are a few sources of legal news and commentary that you might follow with your 15-minute daily investment. These are just some of the dozens of excellent resources that are available from publishers and working professionals in the legal profession.

A Reading List to Get Started

Daily e-Newsletters:

ALM Morning Minute – top headlines from American Lawyer Media
www.law.com

Bloomberg Big Law Business – legal news and commentary
www.biglawbusiness.com

Law360 – legal news and commentary
www.law360.com

PinHawk Law Technology Daily Digest – technology and business of law compilation and commentary
www.pinhawk.com

Blogs:

3 Geeks and a Law Blog – legal operations with a client perspective
www.geeklawblog.com

Adam Smith Esq. – law and economics
www.adamsmithesq.com

Artificial Lawyer – artificial intelligence in the legal profession
www.artificiallawyer.com

Attorney at Work – law practice management tips
www.attorneyatwork.com

Thomas S. Clay is a principal with management consultancy Altman Weil, Inc. With 30 years of experience consulting to the legal profession, he is an acknowledged expert on law firm management principles and is a trusted advisor to law firms and their leaders throughout the United States and Canada. Contact him at tsclay@altmanweil.com.