

## **SPECIALIZING LAW PRACTICE<sup>®</sup>**

### **Excellent Service, Efficiently Delivered**

The core mission of every successful service business, including law firms, is to achieve excellence by providing a service that solves important problems for its customers<sup>1</sup> – and to provide that service in a different way which is superior to anyone else. As two business writers aptly put it, “in business there’s no place to finish except first.”<sup>2</sup>

The other component of success is to deliver customer service in a way that yields adequate financial returns for the owners – to be efficient enough to provide services at competitive rates, while paying the owners more for their time than the owners of competing firms.

*The thesis presented here is that specialization is the most important single strategy for developing excellent services and for marketing and delivering those services efficiently.*

### **Developing Excellent Services; Knowledge Base Issues**

The first task for the law firm that aims to finish first is to develop and offer excellent services, that is, services that are different and better than those offered by competing firms. Specialization is a crucial strategy for achieving this because it allows the firm to build and maintain a knowledge base for each specialty that is deeper and more thorough than that of the competition. All else being equal, the quality of the firm’s advice will be a function of the quality and depth of the knowledge base that the firm maintains to support it.

The size of the knowledge base required to provide excellent service tends to be underestimated because it is assumed, incorrectly, that the required knowledge is limited to that needed to prosecute the client’s legal case or otherwise address the legal aspects of the client’s problem.<sup>3</sup> However, excellent representation requires that the firm view

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<sup>1</sup> Law firms traditionally refer to their customers as clients, but for business analysis purposes they are customers and may be referred to as such in the discussion that follows.

<sup>2</sup> Belasco, James and Stayer, Ralph, *Flight of the Buffalo* New York: Warner Books 1994, p.169.

<sup>3</sup> The California State Bar’s Rules of Professional Conduct do not even require that the practitioner have the knowledge needed to handle the legal aspects of the problem, providing that “if a member does not have sufficient learning and skill when the legal service is undertaken, the member may nonetheless perform such services competently by 1) associating with or, where appropriate, professionally consulting another lawyer reasonably believed to be competent, or 2) by acquiring sufficient learning and skill before performance is required.” State Bar of California, Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 3-110(C). The knowledge base required to deliver excellent service is obviously far deeper than the knowledge required to stay out of trouble with the State Bar.

clients holistically<sup>4</sup>, that is, as people with problems to be solved and not just as legal cases to be processed. One consequence of this approach is that the knowledge base required to render superior service is very extensive.

For example, a top-drawer personal injury practitioner must be equipped not just to prosecute the client's legal case and obtain compensation for the client's injuries, but also to assist with the client's physical and emotional recovery from a traumatic event.

According to a prominent personal injury practitioner whom the author recently interviewed,<sup>5</sup> the knowledge base required of a top-drawer practitioner in that area includes knowledge of all of the following:

- Substantive tort law;
- Procedural rules applicable to the preparation and trial of personal injury matters;
- The rules of evidence;
- Legal rules and procedures relating to subrogation and insurance claims;
- Rules and laws relating to the rights of third party lien claimants, such as insurers, to a portion of the settlement proceeds;
- The local medical service delivery system, including knowledge of which providers will deliver services in consideration of a lien on the client's recovery;
- Laws governing automobile and general liability insurance;
- Experience in negotiating with professional litigants, such as insurance companies;
- A list of resources needed to assist the client with the non-legal aspects of recovery, such as psychotherapists and rehab specialists;
- A list of expert witnesses needed to effectively prosecute personal injury cases, such as, for example, accident reconstruction specialists, vocational rehab specialists, diagnosticians and economists;
- Detailed personal knowledge of the judges who preside over personal injury matters, as well as strong relationships with their clerks and legal assistants (knowing the judge as well as the law is critical); and

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<sup>4</sup> The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "holistic" as "relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts." <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holistic>.

<sup>5</sup> The interview was with Raymond E. Mattison, Esq., a distinguished personal injury practitioner based in San Luis Obispo, California for this project in May of 2014. The author is greatly indebted to Ray for his time and advice.

- Knowledge of the art of negotiation, particularly because so many personal injury cases currently end in mediated settlements. The lawyer, in his role as negotiator, must have a solid understanding of the case from the standpoint of the insurance company and knowledge of the factors that will extract a good settlement from the company.

Similar observations could be made with respect to many other areas of practice – family law, estate planning, business law and criminal defense, to name a few. In each of these fields, knowledge of the applicable law and procedure is only a part, and perhaps not the largest part, of the knowledge base required to do a superior job.

Consider the knowledge base required to give top-drawer advice to closely held businesses. The practitioner’s legal knowledge must include laws and rules relating to all kinds of business entities – corporations, LLCs, partnerships, the rights of the owners versus one another and as against third parties, and how local laws apply to business entities organized in other jurisdictions. The practitioner should also know how to design and document shareholder agreements and prepare estate plans that provide for the orderly transfer and administration of business interests.

In addition, the practitioner must be familiar with laws and regulations relating to the registration and sale of securities and must have enough knowledge of accounting to read and evaluate financial statements. Further, for many businesses, the practitioner must have at least basic knowledge of laws relating to intellectual property rights – trademarks, copyrights, patents, and trade secrets, as well as laws relating to the ownership and licensing of such rights. Likewise, the practitioner must have a working knowledge of tax laws applicable to business entities and their owners. A competent practitioner should be able to advise, for example, whether a corporation, LLC, partnership or sole proprietorship is the preferable form of ownership for any given business.

It is helpful for clients in specific industries – contracting or commercial agriculture, for example – for the practitioner to be streetwise about the client’s business: to know who the key players in the business are, and to join or associate with trade groups that can educate the lawyer about customs and practices in those industries.

A savvy legal advisor also needs to be familiar with the psychology of business relationships – to know, for instance, that trust is crucial to such relationships, and that the absence of trust usually means that the only solution to the client’s problem is to terminate the relationship. The practitioner who knows this will serve his clients well by not spending much time and money trying to save relationships that are irreparably damaged.

Finally, and on top of all of the above, the effective business practitioner must have a long resource list of people whose specialized skills may be needed by business clients – accountants, financial advisors, real estate brokers, bankers who do SBA loans, insurance specialists and appraisers, among others.

Because the size of the knowledge bases required to support excellent service in any given area is so large, a firm that aims for excellence must concentrate its efforts in one, or a very few, areas of practice.

The optimum level of specialization is not an absolute but rather, is dependent on the marketplace in which the firm operates. A business specialist in a small town may have to include estate planning matters in his practice, whereas the practice of a business lawyer in Los Angeles or New York might be limited to the business problems of a specific industry. The goal should be to specialize to the greatest extent that the relevant market will allow and to a greater extent than competing firms in that market.

### **Defining a Firm Specialty**

The initial choice about the areas in which to specialize should be based primarily on what the lawyer likes to do and where his or her skills are already strong. While it is not impossible for a lawyer starting a new practice or specializing in an existing one to learn new skills, it is best to start where he or she is already better than the competition.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to being based on existing skills and experience, a successful specialization strategy must meet a couple of other key tests to be workable over time. First and foremost, the strategy must be client focused, that is, stated in terms of whom the firm intends to serve as clients and what it intends to do for them. To put it another way, the firm's specialization strategy should be based on what clients want to buy, not on what the firm wants to sell.<sup>7</sup> So, for example, the firm's specialty could be "estate planning for business owners," "criminal defense representation in County X," "legal services for real estate developers," "accident and personal injury representation," or "management representation in labor matters."

Specializing in "tax law" or "real property," on the other hand, will not work well as a business strategy because these definitions do not relate to any identifiable set of client problems. A "real property" lawyer could be anyone from a lawyer who counsels development firms on land use issues to a litigator who tries fraud cases; the "tax" lawyer could be anyone from a high-end estate planner to a lawyer who handles tax filings or collection cases. Identifying whom the firm aims to serve and what the firm is going to do for them is crucial.

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<sup>6</sup> The noted business writer Peter Drucker advises us to "waste as little effort as possible on improving areas of low competence...It takes far more energy and far more work to improve from incompetence to low mediocrity than it takes to improve from first-rate performance to excellence." Peter F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2001) p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Drucker says of this, "[t]rue marketing starts out the way Sears starts out – with the customer. . . It does not ask, what do we want to sell? It asks, what does the customer want to buy?" *The Essential Drucker, supra* p. 21.

The area of specialization must also be defined in a way that is appropriate for the firm's marketplace, that is, broad enough to be attractive to a substantial number of potential clients, yet narrow enough to keep the size of the supporting knowledge bases to a manageable size. In some cases this may require some basic market research to determine demand for services in the relevant area.

Thus, if a firm wants to specialize in divorce and child custody matters, it may be useful to find out how many divorce cases were filed in the county that the firm serves over the last year, whether the trend of these filings is up or down over the last few years, how many married couples there are in the area, what the divorce rate is for various age groups in the area, and how many other firms currently offer family law services.

Similarly, a firm that wants to focus on estates and trusts may need to research the potential of that type of practice — how many seniors live in its service area, how many probate and trust proceedings were filed in the local court last year, what is the trend of that number over the last several years, how many high-net worth households are there, and so forth.

Again, the level of specialization is not an absolute but rather a function of the marketplace in which the firm operates. What matters is that the firm focuses on an identifiable target market of clients, and specializes in meeting their needs to a greater extent than competing firms in that market.

### **Marketing the Practice**

Business writers have observed that the most important part of marketing is to design products and services that customers want. “[T]rying to convince a market segment [i.e., a group of clients or customers] to buy something they don't want is extremely expensive and seldom successful.”<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, people don't *need* to be sold on something they already want. In fact, “. . . the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous.”<sup>9</sup>

Since the firm's area of specialization has already been designed to produce services that prospective clients want, the task of marketing its services is mostly done – and the part that remains consists mainly of notifying prospective clients that the services are available. Also, the process of contacting prospective clients is easier than it would otherwise be because the firm has already identified its potential clients and can concentrate its marketing efforts on media that address that specific group.

For instance, a firm that wants to represent real estate developers can join the local contractors' association as an associate member and run ads in its newsletter; the criminal defense practitioner can develop good personal relationships with bail bond firms; the tax/business lawyer can focus his or her outreach efforts on accountants and financial advisors; and the labor lawyer can get involved in trade associations, chambers of

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<sup>8</sup> <http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Marketing>

<sup>9</sup> *The Essential Drucker*, *supra* p. 21.

commerce and service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.) where the members include businesses with substantial numbers of employees.

In many firms, particularly transaction-based firms, the main sources of new clients are the clients who have already dealt with the firm. Here too, specialization makes outreach easier and more effective because those clients will likely need more of the same services at some point.

Estate planners, for example, can periodically send out letters to existing clients reminding them of the need to keep their plans up to date. Labor lawyers can remind their clients to keep their personnel policy manuals updated and consistent with changes in the law. Specialists in other areas can adopt similar strategies that rely on the fact that current clients will likely be clients for the same kind of services down the road.

Another way in which specialization works for marketing is that the firm can obtain referrals from other law firms – it is a resource for them, not competition, because it is good at what it does and does not compete with other firms in their areas of practice. The litigation firm that has a tax or business problem is more likely to refer that problem to a tax or business specialist than to a firm that also does civil litigation, because the specialty firm is not a competitor and may also generate litigation referrals back to the referring firm.

To summarize, specialization makes marketing easier because: (1) the firm’s services are already designed to meet client needs and do not require “selling” to an unwilling audience; (2) outreach to prospective new clients is easier because those efforts can be limited to media that address the firm’s defined target market; (3) the specialized firm is better able to mine its existing client base for new work because marketing efforts directed to them can focus on the services they previously purchased from the firm; and (4) the specialized firm can obtain referrals from other law firms because it does not compete with them in their areas of practice.

### **Delivering Services Efficiently**

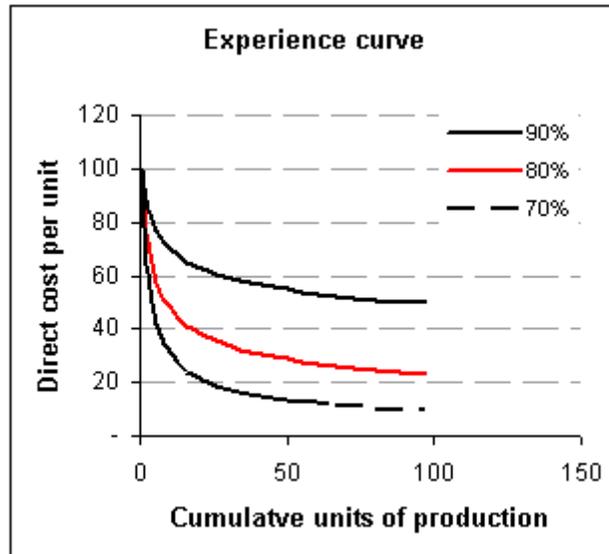
Specialization is vital not only to developing and marketing excellent services, but in delivering those services efficiently. Here are some of the major reasons why:

- Avoids Expensive Learning Curves

Practically every business that produces services, including every law firm, has a “learning curve,” which represents in a graphic way how the cost of producing any given service declines with experience. A typical curve looks like this: <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning\\_curve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_curve). See also <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/learning%20curve>, which defines the learning curve as “a curve plotting performance against practice; *especially* : one graphing decline in unit costs with cumulative output.”



Generally speaking, the curve is steep initially and then levels out as more and more units are produced, until at some point further learning ceases to cut production cost. At that point, the curve approaches being a flat line.

The learning curve tells us that producing anything that is completely new is likely to be very expensive, because new services will incur costs at the top of the curve. In the above illustration, the cost of producing the first unit (of product, legal service, etc.) will be \$100x per unit, whereas that cost will fall 50-90% when production approaches 100 units - depending on the exact shape of the curve.

In addition to being expensive, new services (like new products) are likely to experience quality problems until they have been produced for a substantial period of time. Even the most diligent research by a lawyer unfamiliar with, say, reassessment issues under Proposition 13, may not produce knowledge of policies of the assessor's office or positions of the State Board of Equalization that are known to long-time practitioners who have often dealt with those issues.

Specialization avoids being at the top of the learning curve very often because by definition the firm handles many transactions of the same general type. It is more efficient because the firm has learned how to do the work, or at least most of it, on prior assignments.

- Delegate Work to Staff Through Task Structuring

In a firm that handles many assignments of the same general type, much of the work of producing its services can be delegated to support staff. This is achieved by means of checklists, forms, and procedures which have been developed from experience with prior cases. The business lawyer who has set up 50 limited liability companies knows what basic information is needed to set up the next one, and can have that information collected by staff through an intake letter or form. While the lawyer must tailor the exact

design of a new company to meet the needs of each client, the lawyer can focus on tax and control issues unique to each case and need not spend much time on clerical, information-gathering tasks.

Similarly, the personal injury lawyer who has handled 100 accident cases knows what information is needed in those cases and has pre-drafted interrogatories and document requests that can be set up by staff and then customized in a very short amount of lawyer time. The estate lawyer who has done hundreds of trusts has drafting models for all of the major types that can, again, be generated by support staff and then customized by the lawyer with minimal time input.

Broadly speaking, the time and effort involved in rendering legal services is spent mostly in three areas, namely: (1) information gathering; (2) review, analysis, and decision-making; and (3) execution – that is, producing and delivering documents, filing a lawsuit, conducting a trial, or doing whatever else is required to implement the lawyer’s advice. The potential for efficiency lies in the fact that most of the work in area (1) (gathering information) and much of the work in area (3) can be delegated to non-legal staff whose time is much less expensive than that of a lawyer.<sup>11</sup>

- Minimize Training Expenses for New Staff

Another way that specialization aids efficiency is that it minimizes the amount of training that is required for new staff. A secretary in a firm specializing in civil litigation needs to be familiar with the civil discovery process and the rules of court, but does not need to know much about business tax issues or estate planning. The estate planning assistant must be familiar with wills, trusts and funding documents, but does not need to know much about how the civil discovery process works. At a time when staff mobility is a fact of life for most offices,<sup>12</sup> the specialized office has an advantage because new staffers can be trained to be effective in a minimum amount of time, even without much prior experience.

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<sup>11</sup> The extent to which work can be delegated varies considerably depending on the type of work involved – producing drafts of documents from templates is definitely a staff function, while appearing in court is not. Even in a litigation practice, however, lawyer time into any given case will vary considerably depending on how well the staff can provide support.

<sup>12</sup> According to the United States Department of Labor, the average worker today stays at each job for 4.6 years. See Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, “Employee Tenure in 2014,” (Sept. 18, 2014), <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/tenure.pdf>. Further, “the expected tenure of the workforce’s youngest employees is about half that.” See Jeanne Meister, “Job Hopping is the ‘New Normal’ for Millennials: Three Ways to Prevent a Human Resources Nightmare,” *Forbes Magazine* (Aug. 14, 2012), <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeannemeister/2012/08/14/job-hopping-is-the-new-normal-for-millennials-three-ways-to-prevent-a-human-resource-nightmare/>.

- Focus Library Resources

The practitioner who seeks to be excellent must have the best research tools that are relevant to the practice because, again, the quality of advice given depends largely on the quality of the knowledge base that supports it. Unfortunately, good library resources are not cheap so it is best, from a cost standpoint, to limit the practice to a few areas where even the best library and reference sources are cost effective.

Tax lawyers need specialized resources such as CCH's IntelliConnect<sup>®</sup>, which currently costs about \$300 per month for a small firm. Lawyers who specialize in civil litigation may use services such as VerdictSearch<sup>®</sup>, an online database of verdicts, which is useful for them, but not relevant or cost effective for transaction practices.

Specialized and highly useful resources exist for many other areas of practice, such as labor law and estate planning, which are cost-effective for practices specialized in those areas, but not in offices where these matters are a sideline.<sup>13</sup>

- Optimize Practice Management Systems

An efficient office needs to be run on a practice management system that stores the vital information that is needed to handle the firm's cases.<sup>14</sup> Such systems save time and effort in various ways, but principally because they minimize time spent looking for information. All information needed for the practice is captured and stored on a common platform that is accessible to all lawyers and staff at all times, and information obtained once never needs to be looked for again.

Because the information required to handle cases differs widely in different practice areas, such as criminal defense versus bankruptcy, estate planning or civil litigation, an effective practice management system should be optimized for one or two specialties that have the same or similar data requirements. Trying to optimize a practice management

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, <http://www.bna.com/aba-employment-law>, which lists labor law reference materials alone priced at nearly \$10,000, not including supplements. An estate planning practice needs specialized materials such as the Rutter Group Probate Guide (\$510) and various Continuing Education of the Bar publications, e.g., Trust and Probate Litigation (\$188/yr), California Trust Administration (\$256/yr) and Domestic Partnerships/Same Sex Marriage (\$134/yr) as well as an extensive tax library to support the best advice on estate planning and administration matters.

<sup>14</sup> Many such systems are currently on the market -- Abacus Law, Clio, and Amicus Attorney, to name three. The Law Technology Resource Center of the American Bar Association publishes a Buyer's Guide with an extensive listing of legal industry-specific practice management systems. See <http://buyersguide.americanbar.org/>. Generic contact management systems, such as Goldmine<sup>®</sup> and Salesforce<sup>®</sup>, also do many of the same things,

system that captures information for widely different areas of practice will be difficult, and the result of the effort is likely to be inadequate, unwieldy, or both.<sup>15</sup>

### **Getting Paid for Efficiency; Value Billing**

The specialized practice has the potential to be very profitable because the cost of producing and delivering its services is lower than that of a non-specialized practice, for all of the reasons discussed above. However, the owners of the practice are not going to benefit from the efficiencies of specialization if they charge for their services by the hour, especially because clients generally are not willing to the risk agreeing to pay a higher hourly rate based on the mere promise of the efficiency of specialization. Efficiency drives down the number of hours required to do any given piece of work and therefore reduces, rather than increases, hourly billings.<sup>16</sup> The consequence of this is that an efficient specialty firm must charge for most of its services on the basis of client value, not cost.

In some areas of practice, value billing is already the norm. Personal injury practitioners and collection attorneys typically charge a percentage of the recovery, and matters in various other areas —criminal defense and simple bankruptcies, to name a couple, are customarily handled on a fixed fee basis. In other areas, such as business representation or estate planning, value billing is less common, but makes sense in terms of client relationships and presents business opportunities for efficient, specialized practitioners.

First, the lawyer’s willingness to quote work on a flat fee basis sends an unspoken but important message to the client – the lawyer has done this before, knows exactly what he/she is doing and is willing to bet real money on this by agreeing to do the work at a

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<sup>15</sup> Most practice management systems currently on the market allow users to customize the systems for different practice areas. For example, the Abacus Law practice management system has specialized case intake screens for different practices – one for criminal defense, one for personal injury, one for divorce, and so on. Other systems while customizable appear to serve customer bases mostly in specific practice areas, e.g., Needles<sup>®</sup> (Personal Injury) and Best Case<sup>®</sup> (Bankruptcy).

<sup>16</sup> This may explain why traditional large firms have not been particularly aggressive in bringing efficiency to their practices. For example, Thomas S. Clay and Eric A. Seeger, in *Law Firms in Transition, An Altman Weil Flash Survey*, Altman Weil, Inc., Newtown Square, PA 2014, pp. i-ii, note that “large majorities of law firm leaders . . . agree that greater price competition, practice efficiency, commoditization of legal work, competition from nontraditional service providers, and non-hourly billing are all permanent changes in the legal landscape.” However, they also note that “regrettably, less than half of the law firms surveyed are responding to the pressures of the current market by significantly changing elements of their traditional business model, although larger firms (250 plus lawyers) are doing more in the way of strategic change than smaller ones.” Only 10% of the respondents to the Altman Weil survey believe that law firms will take the lead in reinventing the legal market.”

guaranteed price. What client would not prefer this to the lawyer who tells him that he cannot estimate the cost until the end?

Second, the fact that the client knows what the bill will be up front will likely result in more orders for new work. In any business other than the legal services business, who would seriously ask customers to buy a product or service when they don't know what it will cost? Customers don't like signing blank checks, either for law firms or for anybody else.

Finally, value billing eliminates or reduces billing disputes, and thereby enhances client relationships, because the fees are agreed to in advance and written down in the engagement agreement. The fee is exactly what the client was told it would be — no more and no less.

The potential downside of fixed fees is, of course, that the time required to complete the assignment may not be adequately compensated by the fixed fee, and the client has no incentive to assist in the efficient delivery of services. However, this risk is manageable for specialized practitioners because (1) they have done the same work many times previously and generally will have an accurate idea of what time will be required, and (2) due to the efficiencies discussed above, the time they spend doing the work will likely be less than for non-specialized, traditional firms and will easily be covered by a fixed fee that approximates their hourly fees.<sup>17</sup> Critical to making fixed fee arrangements work, however, is to define carefully the scope of the engagement and to ensure that the client will abide by that scope and not absorb an unreasonable amount of resources now that he or she is not paying by the hour.

In sum, value billing is essential for the profitability of the efficient, specialized firm, but is also an important strategy for building stronger client relationships and for being superior to competing firms.

### **The Trouble with Full Service Law Firms**

If the benefits of specialization are so significant, what is the business logic behind so-called “full service law firms,” that is, firms that render services in multiple practice areas? The reference here is to the solo practitioner who claims to specialize in civil litigation, family law, contracts, estate planning, real estate, elder law and bankruptcy, or the typical small-town “large” firm where one or two lawyers do civil litigation, a couple of others do family law, another one or two do corporate work, and yet another does real estate or labor law.

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<sup>17</sup> In the author's practice, most estate planning and business work is done on fixed fees quoted in advance. Experience has shown that we can quote fees at the low end of the range of hourly charges of competitors and still be paid very well for our time.

The one advantage of such structures is that nearly any warm body that darkens the firm's door is a potential client. However, that one advantage is offset by many disadvantages, among which are the following:

- The firm will have trouble distinguishing itself from competitors because it lacks a clear mission other than its own survival and does not do any one thing especially well. Too often, full service practitioners spend their time playing catch-up ball with specialists who do the same thing all of the time.
- The firm rarely gets referrals from other firms because it competes with them.
- Delivery of the firm's services is harder to manage than for a specialty firm because systems support and library resource requirements are very different for, say, civil litigation than they are for estate planning and other transaction-based practices.
- Staffing will be difficult because different areas of the firm's practice require different skill sets that take months or years to acquire.
- Lawyers at the multi-lawyer full service firm cannot count on meaningful backup from their colleagues since the colleagues do different things and are therefore not competent to substitute for their fellow attorneys in their respective practice areas.
- Each attorney in the multi-lawyer full service firm has a duty of loyalty to the other partners that may conflict with his or her duty of loyalty to the client. The estate planning attorney whose client needs litigation services will refer the client to a partner down the hall even though the lawyer knows that the partner may not be the best litigator to handle the problem. The practitioner in a specialty firm on the other hand can refer the matter to any attorney who he thinks will do a superior job.

In short, full service firms do not make business sense because, they cannot reasonably expect to achieve a level of service that is as good as, much less better, than competing specialty firms.

### **Conclusion**

As noted at the beginning of this article, the core mission of every successful service business is to achieve excellence – to provide a service that meets customers' needs in a way that is different and better than anyone else. Excellence is not just one thing, it is the only thing. As one noted business writer put it,

“If you can't do it excellently, don't do it at all.

Because if it's not excellent it won't be profitable or fun,

And if you're not in business for fun or profit, what the

Hell are you doing here?”<sup>18</sup>

The good news is that achieving excellence does not require a degree from a prestigious law school, political connections, or even exceptional intelligence, helpful as these may sometimes be. All that is required is a single-minded determination to solve problems for clients and do it differently and better than anybody else. Focusing on a few things and doing them well is the tried and true way to get there.

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<sup>18</sup> Townsend, Robert, *Up the Organization*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1970, p. 58.