



## Women's Leadership in Law Firms - Agenda

Program length: 2 hours

This program contains 2 professionalism hours.

Target Audience: Partners, managing partners, women associates

Goals of the program: introduce the practical strategies contained in the Law Society's *Justicia Guide to Women's Leadership in Law Firms* (the "Guide") and show how these tools can help law firms retain and advance women in leadership.

### Professionalism topics

The program is structured to build on the practical tools in the *Justicia Guide to Women's Leadership in Law Firms*. Partners and managing partners should attend, as should women who want to be leaders or who are already leaders and want to learn how to be more effective.

The program will help law firms learn how to use the Guide's tools to increase the diversity of their leadership and retain talented women lawyers. The program will also provide women associates with tips on how to advance in their firms. The program will address the following professionalism topics:

- "Succession planning" – The program will touch on how statistics related to gender and the legal profession may impact succession planning considerations.
- "Understanding the business of law, including financial considerations, client development and strategic planning" – This program will highlight that promoting women into leadership roles makes good business sense. In the second half of the program, associates will learn how to create a leadership plan.
- "Career and profile management in the legal profession" - Associates will learn how to use the Guide to identify strategies to leverage and build their leadership skills
- "Career and profile management in the legal profession" - The program will show associates how to use the Guide to develop a workable leadership plan
- "Mentoring best practices for lawyers and paralegals" – Participants will learn how to be a sponsor, how to find a sponsor and will learn about best practices related to sponsorship
- "Leadership for legal professionals, excluding law firm or other organization-specific standards for promotion and/or partnership" – The overall focus of the program will be leadership.

## Agenda

### **Introduction – 10 minutes**

- Background on Justicia/Retention of Women Project and resources available for associates
- The importance of women's leadership
- Challenges for women in leadership

### **TOPIC: Strategies for women's leadership success – 60 minutes**

#### **Professionalism Content – 60 minutes**

In this session, participants will discuss strategies to ensure that talented women lawyers are successful in the firm environment. Topics for discussion will include:

- Sponsorship (e.g. how to be a sponsor, how associates can find a sponsor, best practices)
- Training ( e.g. management training, leadership coaching)
- Fair and transparent promotion and compensation practices (e.g. supporting diverse leadership styles, fair leadership selection practices, best practices)
- Participants will review the checklist for firms provided in the Guide

The session will be targeted toward managing partners and partners; however, women associates may also benefit from the discussion. If the program is presented in-house, the facilitator will highlight any relevant programs or policies the firm may have. These topics will also be discussed in the context of business planning and succession planning.

*This section of the program highlights the Law Society's Professional Management Practice Guideline, particularly 6.8.1. Leadership, which outlines leadership activities that lawyers may want to engage in and 6.8.2 Planning, which outlines activities lawyers may wish to engage in to manage change and plan for the future in their practice. This session will also highlight mentoring best practices for lawyers, in light of the Professional Management Practice Guideline, which at 6.8.3. emphasize coaching strategies and how associates can benefit from coaching and mentoring.*

### **TOPIC: Preparing for Leadership – 60 minutes**

#### **Professionalism content – 65 minutes**

In this session, participants will work together in small groups to do the groundwork necessary for preparing a leadership plan. By working together associates may overcome the reluctance and hesitation some might otherwise feel when starting to develop a leadership plan.

- Participants will use the sample leadership plan to set goals and identify action steps
- Participants will discuss best practices/strategies to develop leadership competencies
- A leader at the firm will be asked to facilitate each group's discussion, provide information about his or her own path to a leadership position

- Each small group will have one person report to the group-at-large and the group will then share ideas and best practices.
- Participants will review the checklist for lawyers provided in the Guide

This session will be targeted toward associates; however, partners may also be interested in attending and leaders in the firm will be needed to facilitate the small group discussions.

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### **Conclusion and follow-up**

At the end of the workshop, each associate participant will be provided with a template leadership plan and asked to set a specific date after the program to meet with his or her mentor/sponsor to work on developing an effective career plan.

Suggested follow-up activities:

- A follow-up workshop to review and discuss the individual leadership plans associates have prepared (in pairs or small groups) and to address any difficulties associates may have had in preparing them
- A panel discussion with leaders at the firm to provide information and tips about their path to leadership
- Individual meetings of associates with mentors/sponsors to discuss implementation of their leadership plans and to agree on a schedule for updating their plans

## Facilitators' Guide

The following are tips to assist Facilitators in law firms when delivering the workshop.

1. The *Justicia Guide to Women's Leadership in Law Firms* should be distributed to participants in the workshop in advance, with the agenda for the program.
2. Participants will be asked to refer more particularly to the Sample Leadership Plan at p. 28 & 29 of the Guide and the Checklists at p. 44 & 45 of the Guide. These should be highlighted to participants.
3. The facilitator may wish to distribute the Sample Leadership Plan as loose leafs during the workshop to allow participants to work with the document.
4. Participants are asked to familiarize themselves with their firm's specific policies related to promotion and compensation. The facilitator may wish to provide participants with links to the relevant policies ahead of the workshop.
5. If the facilitator involves partners and/or mentors/sponsors to facilitate the small group discussions, prepare them for the session. They should be provided with the agenda and objective of the session, information about what is expected of them, and the format and content of the session. A pre-workshop meeting with the discussion group facilitators may be advisable.
6. Prepare a power point presentation or a PDF document to present the introduction and the general overview of the action plan and the checklists. A template power point is provided for the introduction about the Justicia project. Facilitators may wish to complete the power point by adding information about other topics covered in the workshop.
7. The facilitator may wish to identify the follow-up activity for the session (e.g. individual meetings with mentors/sponsors, follow-up workshop panel discussion). This activity should be described at the workshop.