Building a Future for Success – 10 Tips
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1. Know Your Own "Big Picture"
   - Have a five year plan
   - What do you want from a career in law?
   - Do you really want law?
     - 50% of lawyers leave practice of law within 5 years
   - What are your preferences?
     - Support network of large firm?
     - Freedom of sole practice?
     - Compromise of smaller firm?
   - What are your personal goals?
     - Financial?
     - Family? Other interests?
   - What is your exit plan? What is the exit plan of those around you? Do they mesh?
2. Carefully consider your Scope of Practice
- Age of the Generalist has gone
- Era of increased specialization (i.e., medical negligence or motor vehicle accident benefits)
- Benefits of specialization are increased expertise and confidence
- Risks of specialization are legislative changes, marketing realities, lack of diversity
- More general practice requires more effort to stay current but more secure

3. Learn and Love Your Craft
- Now more than ever, pressure to stay current
- Be a trial lawyer not a settlement lawyer
- Learn from others by watching trials, motions, etc.
- Make sure you are in the right type of law for you
- Know what you don't know
- Attend CLE
- Clients and co-workers understand and appreciate a passion for what you do
4. Learn and Love the Business of Law

- For most, running a law firm is running a small business
- You need to understand accounting, human resources, business law and cash flow
- You need to know how to make a business plan and make it work with banks
- Need to know how to negotiate leases, contracts, etc.
- Embrace technology (within reason)
- More billing does not always equal more money in your pocket

5. Plan from the Result Backwards

- Start with a clear picture of your ideal business reality
  - Income expectations
  - Practice mix
  - Stress level and time demands
- Make decisions based on goals
  - Where to market
  - Who to hire
- Test for any Decision: does this bring me closer to my goal? (be realistic)
6. Protect Your Integrity at all Costs

- Most lawyers have an “A list” and a “B list”
- Massive pressure to win
- Constantly facing ethical challenges
- You will only lose your integrity once
- It takes many years to build a reputation, only a single moment to destroy it
- Be aware of power imbalance dynamics
- What do you want your reputation to be?

7. Find a Support System

- Someone from inside your firm
- Someone from outside your firm
- Law Society Mentorship program
- OTLA Mentorship program
- Use your own personal contacts
- DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR ADVICE!
8. Treat Your Support Staff Like Gold

- Widespread perception that lawyers are arrogant
- A solid team willing to go the extra mile will make all of the difference
- Success requires loyalty – this includes all of the support staff at your firm, as well as people you frequently do business with, like court reporters, trial coordinators, medical office staff, etc.
- You never know when you’re going to need that extra favour

9. Learn How to Market

- Critical Skills to growing a successful practice, that may make you irreplaceable
- Lack of marketing skills make you dependant on others
- Primary marketing tool for lawyers is personal contacts
- Challenge for Litigators is lack of ongoing relationship with clients
- No matter how talented you are, you will not thrive if you can’t get the word out
10. RELAX. It’s a Marathon, not a Sprint

- Gauge how much you can SAFELY work
- Are you being effective?
- Take Vacations
- Balance Work – Family - Health

"Actually, I'm a litigator."