

News

Groom Executive Principal Chris Keller Shares Advice for New Partners

ATTORNEYS & PROFESSIONALS

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Groom's executive principal, [Christine Keller](#), was featured by *Practical Law* in their article, "Congratulations, You Made Partner: What Happens Now?," where she explored the role of partners within the firm and how to find success in that position.

When asked about the role of partners at Groom, Keller said, "Our goal at Groom is for the shift to partner to not be too dramatic. If you are an effective senior associate or of counsel, you are typically already directing a lot of your attention outward. Even before becoming a partner, you have a lot of client interaction and have generally started to build a network of contacts outside the firm. However, that responsibility increases even more as you move into the partner role, where getting to know existing clients and expanding your network (for example, to include colleagues in other firms, individuals in charge of associations and conferences, publishers, and potential clients) becomes even more of a priority.

"Additionally, as you move into the partner role, you are expected to train, mentor, and delegate work to associates. This is a skill that does not develop overnight. Fortunately, training, mentoring, and delegating effectively are skills that a senior associate or of counsel can focus on before becoming a partner and work to improve throughout their career. Periodically participating in 360 reviews as a partner can help to identify opportunities for growth in this area.

"A partner may be asked to participate as a leader on a firm committee and be responsible for the development and achievement of that committee's goals. For example, we have various committees at Groom, all of which provide vital services to the firm, including:

- A recruiting committee.
- A professional development committee.
- A "fun" committee.

"Showing that you can excel on one of these committees may lead to:

- A role as a practice group leader.
- A seat on the firm's executive committee.
- A role as the firm's executive principal."

On the expectations of a partner, she continued, “Each partner is asked to contribute to the firm in a meaningful way. We recognize that every person is different and will bring something unique to their role as a partner. In addition to consistently providing excellent client service (which is a baseline requirement), there are many ways in which a partner can contribute, including:

- Obtaining new work from existing clients.
- Establishing new client relationships.
- Developing an area of expertise.
- Taking an active role in firm management.

“The mix of how much of these responsibilities one person is taking on versus another will not always be the same, nor is that required or expected.”

Keller also shared her thoughts on how a partner can become a successful rainmaker, saying, “Building relationships outside the firm is important at every level. A good starting point is with existing clients and law school friends. Joining a group that will bring you into regular interaction with the same set of individuals is another good way to build relationships over time. Inviting people to lunch and firm-sponsored events and sharing articles or information are all good ways to form a connection. Also, when traveling to another city, meeting someone face to face over coffee or a drink after work is a nice, low-key way to connect.”

In order to build trust amongst clients and colleagues, “Get to know people! Understand what their priorities and goals are and help them to achieve them when you can. Explore common interests (both work-related and non-work-related) and discuss those when you have an opportunity,” said Keller.

Finally, she offered this advice: “Do not put too much pressure on yourself in the beginning. It is exciting to be given the title and responsibility of partner but no one expects you to do everything differently that first year or even the first five years. Enjoy the achievement and lay out a strategy for the next five to ten years with clear goals so you can measure your progress. Consider working with an outside coach to get the benefit of expertise that goes beyond your firm.”

To read the article, [click here](#).