

CBA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Leading the Canadian Law Firm in the 21st Century: Managing the Future

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Six Strategies to Help Retain Women in Law Firms

1. DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE

- more than 50% of law school graduates are women
- women leave the legal profession in higher numbers than men in the senior associate years
- women are under represented in the partnership ranks and law firm management
- increasing numbers of women are in house at our most valuable clients and are buyers of legal services
- our clients are increasingly seeking diversity, including gender diversity, on legal teams

2. COMMUNICATE THE BUSINESS CASE

- communicate the firm's commitment to the advancement of women internally and externally
- repeat the commitment frequently

3. FORM A WOMEN'S NETWORK

- understand importance and benefits of networking
 - helps women find a voice
 - builds relationships in the firm
 - reduces isolation and increases sense of connection to firm
 - assists in mentoring
 - develops leadership skills
 - builds loyalty to firm
 - provides access to information re firm
- listen to the women in your law firm
- identify a champion for the network
- provide resources to support the network

The right people. The right results.™

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4. PROVIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TAILORED TO WOMEN LAWYERS AND WOMEN CLIENTS

- not always sports focused
- fewer group activities
- timing and length of events
- creative strategies:
 - book readings
 - group cooking classes
 - wine tastings
 - cultural tickets
- golf dilemma??
- provide business development training

5. ENHANCE MATERNITY LEAVE/PARENTAL LEAVE SUPPORT AND OTHER WORK/LIFE BALANCE MEASURES

- maternity leave toolkit
- maternity leave buddies
- enhanced coaching and support around parental leave
- establish and publish maternity leave and flex time policies
- provide a template for developing a flex time arrangement
- monitor and review flex time arrangements

6. MENTORING

- formal mentoring
- informal mentoring
- mentoring circles

Kirby Chown
Ontario Regional Managing Partner
McCarthy Tétrault LLP

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