

## CHECKLIST FOR NEW LEGAL STAFF

1. Display Compassion

Lawyers are in business to help people. Many people who come to a law office are troubled and uneasy. Never lose the human touch. And never forget that, if it weren't for clients, the firm would be out of business and you would be out of a job.

2. Don't Discuss Business Out of the Office

Never talk outside the office about what happens here. Lawyers must keep client confidences and secrets. This information is privileged. As an employee of a law office, you are also responsible for preserving the client's confidences and secrets. Violation of a client confidence is a most grievous error and grounds for instant dismissal.

3. Be Attentive to the Business of Practicing Law

The practice of law is a profession, but it is also a business. If you see an opportunity to save a dollar, let the lawyer or office manager know. Everyone will benefit if you are right.

4. Be Professional in Your Appearance and Speech

Clients pay money for help with their problems. They expect to pay a professional fee, and they expect to deal with professionals. Therefore, follow the office dress code and dress like a professional. Avoid chewing gum, reading books at your desk, checking personal e-mail, surfing the Internet, or any other activity that may not be well-received if viewed or overheard by a client.

5. Be a Stickler for Details

Lawyers deal in documents. What goes out of the office electronically or on paper is the hallmark of a legal business. Do not rely on spell-check or grammar check. Always proofread your work for accuracy and meaning. The final product should be crisp and professional. If what is being said does not make sense, bring it to the attention of the lawyer. If you are given an instruction you do not understand, ask for clarification.

6. Establish Priorities and Keep the Work Flowing

Remember that clients want *action and they want it now*. Today's work should get out today. If you have more work stacked up than you can handle today, establish priorities and check with the lawyer on what should be done first.

7. Be a Solution-Oriented Communicator

Communicate your needs. Make suggestions for improvement. Legal staff and lawyers can work together efficiently and cooperatively if they communicate well with each other.

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### **IMPORTANT NOTICES**

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