

Recognizing: Armstrong Teasdale

Project Title: Passport to a Higher Profiles

Armstrong Teasdale's Marketing Department members, who help lawyers cultivate their business development skills, began to notice a growing concern among young associates. Many felt like they were strangers to our partners and senior associates. They seemed at a loss for a way to raise their profiles within the firm and told us they didn't even know how to make acquaintances with those on other floors of our offices.

At stake for these young lawyers is their ability to build relationships with the firm's rainmakers and receive the types of assignments, referrals and cross-selling opportunities necessary to get on the partnership track. Because of this, we decided there was a need for an innovative program that would give these associates a reason to contact key lawyers within the firm and create a structure in which they could arrange casual meetings in a comfortable and unintimidating environment.

The answer came to Jamie Windsor, our marketing manager, when she attended a business publication's program aimed at teaching participants how to work a room. The discussion included a description of a networking event game used to help guests meet each other. The game gave Jamie the idea for our innovative "Build Your Profile Passport Program."

In this program, associates become "tourists" who travel around the firm to meet six key lawyers outside of their practice area. Five of these lawyers are determined by the Marketing Department and the sixth is determined by the traveling associate. Tourists who complete the program receive a travel gift with the firm's logo.

Our first obstacle in launching this program was obtaining permission from the firm. We weren't sure if partners would agree to take the time out of their busy schedules to meet associates, especially those outside of their practice areas. However, we were able to convince the firm's practice group leaders that this program had value and it was eventually approved by the firm's Operations Committee.

Another obstacle was matching the best partners and senior associates with each tourist. We needed to make sure that the partners in the program would be willing to "play." Because of that, a Marketing team determined the pairings. We then contacted the partners and senior associates we had chosen and asked for their participation.

If they agreed, they received a brief document outlining expectations and best practices for participating. They were then contacted by the tourist who invited them for coffee, lunch or a beverage after work.

The Marketing Department's graphic artist designed a tailored "passport," for each associate. This tri-fold 4" by 5-1/2" piece is fashioned to look like a real passport. The cover of the passport has a circular graphic that says "Build Your Profile Passport Program" with the tourist's name printed below. Within the passport are the names of five attorneys the tourist must arrange to meet. Contact information, a photo and short summary of each lawyer's practice are also included. Underneath each photo is a line for each attorney to initial and date after the meeting takes place. There is also a blank area for the tourist to add a sixth lawyer of his or her choice.

The first passport session was held from January to July 2013 in the firm's St. Louis office. We've now had five successful sessions with a total of 95 participants. Feedback continues to show that partners and tourists agree that at a minimum, they take away at least one piece of valuable insight from each meeting. But most important, many find out that the program allows them to plant the seeds of a new relationship. In addition, the program leads to improved morale, increased internal referrals and cross-



selling opportunities, and better teamwork.

We believe this is a priceless outcome for a program that costs almost nothing to administer.