

What is the Hierarchy in a Law Firm?

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EINPresswire.com/ -- As you know the practice of law is a profession that is, at the bottom, an exercise in the art of presenting two sides of an argument for a neutral arbiter or presenting the interests of parties who want to reach an agreement. Those are essentially the kinds of interactions that lawyers facilitate. The tools of the trade for lawyers are rules, statutes, and regulations that serve as the parameters for how disputes are settled or agreements made. Therefore, lawyers must know or be able to easily find the laws relevant to any particular situation.

The work of a lawyer involves noble concepts of fairness and justice. But – let's be honest – a lawyer's day-to-day routine involves a lot of paperwork. A lot of organization and administration goes into handling a legal matter, and those details have very little to do actually drafting pleadings, briefs, or contract provisions. It is that reality of legal practice, along with having too much work for one person to handle, which has given birth to the modern law firm.

No matter whether your firm is one of the largest in the country or a solo, you need help handling all facets of the job. Accordingly, you need other lawyers and assistants to help you. This article will break down the [law firm hierarchy](#). The complexity of a firm can often be as complex as the areas of law in which the firm specializes.

Also, remember that if you need help marketing your firm to get additional business, be sure to look for a digital marketing agency that is laser-focused on law firms, like West Palm Beach's digital marketing agency Oamii. Having worked with many law firm clients we at Oamii know what the market is like and will help you make the right marketing and management choices.



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The Law Firm Hierarchy: Attorneys

There are many different types of lawyers at a law firm, stratified by experience, salary, seniority, and sometimes purpose. Let us take a moment to go through the list, starting with the attorneys at the top of the hierarchy.

Partners: The owners of a law firm are traditionally referred to as “partners,” though sometimes they are referred to as “shareholders” or members.” They have an ownership interest in the firm and are typically the most experienced lawyers who command the highest billable rate. Moreover, one partner is normally chosen to run the firm’s operations, and that person is called the “managing partner.” The managing partner chairs a committee that oversees the strategic direction of the firm.

Associates: Associates are employees of the firm with no ownership interest in the firm. Associates typically have less experience than partners, and bill for their time at a lower hourly rate. Associates do not normally have much client contact, as that is left to the partners. Yet, associates handle the lion’s share of the day-to-day legal drafting and other legal work for the firm. Larger firms tend to split the associates into two groups: Senior Associates with more experience and responsibility, and Junior Associates who are newer to the firm.

Of Counsel: An “Of Counsel” attorney is normally someone with a lot of experience who is nearing retirement. The “Of Counsel” title is used by those who were formerly partners at a firm, and still practice but no longer have the responsibilities of a partner. Also, former judges who join a firm later in their careers are often given an “Of Counsel” title.

Contract Attorney: Contract attorneys are lawyers who work for a firm on a temporary basis. They are usually not employees of a firm, but rather are placed at a firm to work on a single large matter when more manpower is required. Contract attorneys are very similar to temps, who bill the firm by the hour.

Law Clerks & Summer Associates: Law clerks are law school students who work at a firm to gain experience and school credits. They can be in unpaid internships or may receive a small stipend. Summer associates, similarly, are people who are still in law school. The difference is that a summer associate is hired to work at a firm for the whole summer. It is normally not for school credit, but to secure a job from the firm upon graduation. Both law clerks and summer associates will do legal research and

The Law Firm Hierarchy: Non-Attorney Staff

Law firms, small and large, would not be able to function without the assistance of professional support staff. Here are the main positions for non-attorney staff members, listed in hierarchy

order from highest on the totem pole to lowest:

Paralegals: Paralegals have some legal training but are not attorneys. They have a practical working knowledge to conduct research and ensure that pleadings are properly filed, among myriad other jobs.

Legal Assistants: Legal assistants is an umbrella term for paralegals or other support people who have some legal background.

Legal Secretaries: Similar, if not often considered the same, as legal assistants. Legal secretaries handle all types of administrative matters in a law practice.

Receptionists: The person at a firm who first comes in contact with a client or potential client is a receptionist. Accordingly, receptionists play a large role in the culture and personality of a firm.

Investigators: Many criminal defense or personal injury law firms employ the use of an investigator. An investigator will go out on behalf of a client and gather important factual information about a case.

Marketing Director: The marketing director can be in-house, but many times a firm's marketing is handled by a digital marketing agency that is outside of the firm with expertise in [legal marketing](#).

If you are looking for just such a director, we welcome you to learn more about Oamii. We are equipped and experienced enough to work effectively through the law firm hierarchy and get results by increasing the potential client pool by understanding how legal marketing works.

To learn more about how Oamii can help your law firm thrive, please fill out our online contact form, or call us at 561-228-4111 today.

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