

FOREWORD

by Mark Goulston

My good friend, the late leadership guru and best-selling author Warren Bennis, was fond of saying that managing people is like herding cats. To the best of my knowledge, Warren never considered how much more challenging that would be if a lot of those cats had law degrees.

I enjoy frequent opportunities to speak with groups of lawyers, and I often begin those talks by saying, “I know a single word that causes you more problems than nearly any other word in your practice, in your career, and possibly in your life. Do you want to know what it is?” Priding themselves on being discerning, and skeptical about such a seemingly audacious but foolhardy challenge, they say, “Yes,” but are no doubt thinking to themselves, “Okay, Dr. Mark, this had better be good or else you’re starting with one big strike against you.”

I then reply, “That word is ‘p-e-o-p-l-e.’” At that point nearly everyone in the audience laughs or groans. I then go on to explain that the word “people” often reminds them of those 20 percent of their colleagues and employees who make up 80 percent of the headaches (it’s actually more like 10 percent and 90 percent). And the sad thing is that too often thinking about and dealing with those few high-maintenance people will cause them to overlook and

underappreciate the vast majority of great people who work for and with them.

At times, even managing great colleagues and employees can be a challenge for lawyers. Although lawyers are excellent problem solvers, too often that talent doesn't extend to dealing with management problems and problem people. Even with loads of intelligence and determination, lawyers often struggle when it comes to motivating, developing, and holding their people accountable. Which leads me to this much-needed and wonderful book written by two nationally recognized practice management consultants and business coaches, Andrew Elowitz and Marcia Watson Wasserman. Given Andrew's prior career as a lawyer and his current practice that focuses on developing people in law firms, and Marcia's prior experience managing law firms and her current consulting practice devoted to legal management best practices, they are uniquely qualified to write and speak about how lawyers can become champion managers.

I'm sure most of you have heard the old proverb, "Where there's a will, there's a way." In reality and practice, this proverb has it slightly backwards. As important as resolve and perseverance can be in finding a way to solve problems, it's frequently more a matter of: "Where there's a way, you will find the will to do it." Or, in other words, once you know how to approach and solve a problem, it's much easier to find the motivation and backbone to tackle it. You need look no further than *Lawyers as Managers* to find that way, and once you understand its approach to people management in law firms, your motivation and backbone will surely follow.

Information on the way to manage people in law firms has been sorely lacking. That is—up until now. *Lawyers as Managers* fills the gap and gives lawyers everything they want and need to know about managing people that they never learned in law school. It is not just a book to help you deal with the challenging people in your law firm – it is a primer, guide, and road map all in one on how to empower, motivate, inspire, and bring out the best of everyone in your law firm . . . including you!

And therein lies a great opportunity. How well or poorly you manage the people in your law firm will determine how successful, effective, and well respected you are. Manage well and people will feel it's an honor and privilege to work at your firm under your supervision. Do it poorly and they'll be sending out their resumes to go elsewhere.

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