

Tips for Effective Leadership

1. Reach out to your predecessors to find out what worked and did not work. If your section does not already do so, consider starting a tradition of leaving a memorandum of suggestions at the end of the year for your successors, and update it throughout the year. Include specific dates and timelines. After even a few short years, the collection of memoranda will be a valuable asset.
2. Personal outreach is critical for recruiting volunteers or attendees for events. The e-blast, committee listserv emails, etc. are helpful, but there is no substitute for individual, personalized outreach.
3. Set clearly defined goals with benchmarks that are easy to measure, communicate those goals, and follow up over the course of the year. Always phrase your follow up in terms of how you can help your colleagues achieve their goals.
4. Communication is key. Make sure the leaders in your section understand the need to be responsive to emails and calls. That means getting back to people within 24 hours. If you are out of the office for an extended time, set an auto-reply on your emails and update your outgoing voicemail message so that people know you are not ignoring them.
5. Engage with other sections and divisions to allow members to interact with a broader group and combine resources. Consider expanding this idea beyond lawyers and thinking about ways to facilitate interaction between your members and the constituencies with which they interact in their work.
6. Have in-person meetings where feasible. Doing so helps identify the best resources and helps build relationships that will be valuable during your leadership tenure.
7. Here's a great tip that your committee members and fellow leaders will appreciate: Use the BCC line when sending mass emails. For example, send an email to yourself, then BCC everyone on the list. That way, the recipients can email you back directly with any questions but will not start an endless chain of reply-all emails that you will have started.
8. Be considerate of people's time. For example, consider dividing your section or committee leadership into specific groups or task forces with clearly defined roles so that your volunteers do not feel like they are wasting time in meetings and on calls where they are not contributing.
9. Find a way to recognize members who go above and beyond with their work, whether through a call, email, personalized letter, or recognition within the Bar. Take advantage of the PR staff at the Bar, and recognize them with press releases where appropriate. Those press releases have the added advantage of enhancing lawyer image by reflecting on our positive contributions in the community. Set specific times on your calendar to remember to do so.
10. Recruit committee members, particularly those you know would be helpful. Many people do not think about the Bar as the natural place to volunteer their time but could be quite helpful if called upon.
11. Pay attention to those who might potentially succeed you, and make sure to share your insight with the appropriate people so that your section or committee will be in good hands going forward.