

## Talent and Client Retention and Growth: Nothing Grows Under the Banyan Tree

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on April 12, 2017

“Nothing grows under a banyan tree.” This Indian proverb speaks of leadership styles. The banyan is a great tree. It spreads its branches, drops air-roots, develops secondary trunks and covers the land. A full grown banyan may cover more than an acre of land. In fact, the largest known is almost two acres in Lahaina. Animals, birds, and people find shelter under the tree’s shade. But nothing grows under its dense foliage, and when it dies, the ground beneath lies barren and scorched. It is often said that leaders, whether they are team leaders, firm leaders, practice leaders, department chairs, or client relationship leaders—if they do not encourage others to participate or inform their leadership; if they do not encourage and prepare others to become leaders or client relationship managers, then the relationships, the firm, the practice, may become like the ground beneath the banyan tree once the leader is gone—barren and lifeless.

To prevent this from happening follow these simple guidelines:

- Assign a vice chair; a co-team leader; a younger partner or senior associate to be the next in line.
- Ask members of the group, the firm, the client team their advice. How do they view the group or relationship from their viewpoint?
- Ask the client for feedback about which lawyers from the firm they’ve enjoyed working with and for feedback about team performance.
- Be a giver not a taker.
- Ask clients about their goals and find opportunities to collaborate to reach goals.
- Ask team, practice, firm members about their goals.

It is best to create an environment where everyone may grow and flourish. To learn more about creating collaborative cultures, email [Silvia](#) or call 978-526-8316.