

The 5 key components to a successful client team program (that are often overlooked)

By [Jim Cranston](#) on June 18, 2015

We often hear “it didn’t work for us” or “we just can’t seem to get our client team program going.” Have you tried and ultimately scrapped your client team program? Ever wonder what went wrong?

Consider these five key components as a prerequisite to any client team initiative:

1. **Appoint a Senior Partner to Lead the Program:** Every firm should appoint a well-respected, well-liked, top rainmaking senior partner to administrate, drive and champion the firm’s client team initiative (not the managing partner). A recent Thomson Reuters survey of law firm leaders cited the biggest impediment to client team success is the lack of accountability of the client team leaders. A senior partner heading the initiative will provide that accountability.
2. **Available and Meaningful Metrics (data):** You can’t manage what you don’t measure. This time tested management truth applies to successful client teams. Measure the activities and/or results that are important to achieving your client team’s goals and objectives. Examples include business development meetings, relationship events, new introductions and the standard performance metrics from accounting (fees collected, hours billed, profitability by matter, etc.)
3. **Strong Team Leadership:** Success of a client team program hinges on the leadership of the individual team leaders (as measured by his/her willingness to assume the responsibility). In our experience with clients, most teams with “unwilling” leaders will simply dissolve over time. Leadership is the glue for any team.
4. **Training:** A successful client team model is a must, including educating all team members on what to do. “Training” includes roles, responsibilities and expectations. Other successful training programs include sales skills, business plan development and project management.
5. **Firm Support:** For a healthy and sustainable client team program, strong support from multiple groups is imperative (and not just the managing partner). A few notable groups include the management committee, practice section leaders and the marketing/business development department.

Clients continue to expect more from their law firm service providers. A robust and disciplined approach to providing outstanding client service is a must in today’s competitive legal market.