

5 Tactics To Make Partner in Your Firm



make-partner

They don't want you to make partner.

That's the typical attitude many partners have at a variety of firms large and small. Think about this for a second. Why do most attorneys want to make partner?

For the benefits!

Once you've made partner you're able to reap the financial and reputation rewards of a partnership. You're no longer an employee, you're an owner and you're entitled to the rewards of firm ownership.

Partners will have to share the profits with you

They won't be happy.

If it's a sizable amount they'll dilute their ownership stake, receiving fewer profits as a result. Would you jump at the chance to take that deal?

Probably not.

It makes sense then that partners would prefer to ignore their associates. Yet, there are some partnerships where partners are throwing partnership to a few select associates.

What's the difference?

It's all about their tactics. Savvy associates understand their partners. Giving them what they want improves their chances.

It's about creating the right *kind* of results

When it comes to results there are two kinds. You'll need both to become an all-star and both to demonstrate that you're partnership material.

- **Conventional results.** Being great at your job, going above and beyond and performing well in general. If you're a real estate attorney, for example, your work is pristine, thorough and of the highest quality. You know, what your firm pays you to do.
- **Transformative results.** These are results that make things better for your company, the industry or clients as a whole. It can be as simple as shared knowledge or as comprehensive as advanced rainmaking skills. You produce what Cal Newport calls "[Deep work](#)."

This is the problem.

The vast majority of attorneys (and most employees) focus their attention on "*conventional results*." They work *very* hard.

Here's why this matters.

Conventional results build trust. It's easy for partners, managers or shareholders to take a risk on you if you're trustworthy and your work is above reproach. This trust is currency.

Transformative results create leverage. It gives individual attorneys a strong negotiating position, power, credibility and immense authority – inside and outside their firm. Here are five transformative tactics you can use to (eventually)

make partner at your firm.

Tactic #1: Rainmaking on-demand

You have a proven track record landing large or immensely profitable clients. This typically refers to a collection of skills and abilities. If you're a powerful rainmaker, you're able to:

- Generate client interest, desire and action
- Identify, build and nurture relationships with decision makers
- Create a compelling value proposition + irresistible offer to draw clients in
- Under-promise and over-deliver to maximize client lifetime value

This is work that's done on top of the day-to-day work you do as an attorney in your firm. Successful rainmakers have a keen understanding of human psychology, marketing and negotiation.

Tactic #2: Connections everywhere

You're able to build, cultivate and produce relationships with almost anyone. There's a science to personal connection. With the right approach, it's easy for skilled attorneys to develop a relationship with anyone.

Think about it.

Imagine that you're able to build relationships with important celebrities, entrepreneurs, thought leaders and influencers in the world? How valuable would that kind of clout be to your firm? Successful connectors are able to:

- Identify key relationships that serve their/the firm's best interests
- Build legitimate win/win relationships with celebrities, key influencers, entrepreneurs and thought leaders
- Maintain that relationship, in the face of setbacks, failures, ups and downs
- Convert relationship capital into financial capital, when needed

Attorneys who are high in extraversion tend to do well as connectors. They're the social butterflies who just "*happen*" to know everyone. Better yet, they're able to provide important introductions and facilitate mutually beneficial connections.

Tactic #3: Information networks

You've developed your own information network. You have access to insider information.

Somehow you know.

You're aware of the comings and goings of your client's industry and your own. You know the who, what, where, when and why of any social or political situation.

You're plugged in.

You receive a steady supply of information somehow. It's an ability partners in your firm are unable to reproduce and the information you provide is unmatched in quality and reliability. As an information broker you should be able to:

- Create, maintain and expand your own information network
- Find answers to difficult-to-answer questions others simply can't answer
- Provide your firm with a steady supply of information that is not publicly available
- Receive sensitive and private information in a way that's legal and above board
- Minimize your firm's exposure to legal action

If you're able to build/develop your own information network, you become irreplaceable. Your firm will do whatever it takes to keep you with them. They'll also push you to reveal your secrets and give them your information network.

Tactic #4: Persuasive influence

You're able to sell, persuade, sway, convince or entice others to do what you want.

You're a salesman.

That's the long and short of it. You're able to get people to do what you'd like them to do because you understand decision making at a psychological level. As a master persuader you're able to:

- Act as matchmaker, providing all sides with the favorable conditions they need to support you
- Make a compelling case for clients, partners and your firm to work together
- Approach things free from manipulation, coercion or dishonestly
- Speak with a silver tongue, a charming personality and a listening ear

Persuaders play the role of matchmaker, working to arrange favorable outcomes for all parties involved. They're convincing, sincere and well-spoken, doing what it takes to maintain good relationships.

Tactic #5: Process mastery

You can create processes that enable you to create bigger, better, faster results using less time, money, resources, people.

You're a playmaker.

You have an engineering mind. You're able to make your existing circumstances better. You're able to use your existing materials to systematically improve your firm's performance. If you're a process maker you'll be able to:

- Find and identify new ways to achieve bigger, better, faster results using less time, money, resources and people
- Provide evidence that your newfound process or methodology works and is superior to the existing system
- Be able to teach, share and develop the skills of others
- Be able to improve, iterate on and scale your process throughout the firm
- Create a process to teach others

Processors are able to create helpful tools, resources, systems, procedures and policies to achieve scale. They're able to do more with less, accomplish more in less time. They're able to dramatically outperform their peers simply because they have better systems and procedures.

Seeing a pattern?

None of these have anything to do with the day-to-day work you do as an attorney. Transformative change is just that. Transformative. If you master any of these skills you become *immensely* valuable to your firm.

Want partners to fight for you?

Do you want them to fight for you to become an equity partner? Focus your attention on developing just one of these skills. Master two or more and you're permanently irreplaceable.

Why would they fight for you?

Because a rising tide raises all ships. Your skills produce the kind of profits firms need to grow. Firm growth means more revenue. If you're an associate looking to make partner, invest in yourself. Work to produce the results needed to add value.

Produce that value for the partners in your firm.

Make it clear that you'd like to make partner in exchange for the stellar results you can provide. With the right approach and solid negotiation strategies, you'll have what you need to motivate partners to act.

And why would they act?

They'll act because they don't want to lose you. Give them what they need and you'll find the partners and shareholders in your firm are eager for you to take your place beside them.

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