

Lawyers As Project Managers – An Alternative Path To Partnership?

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If there really is going to be a revolution, or evolution, of the law firm business model, could that include alternative tracks to partnership? Last week, there was a lively discussion in the blogosphere about lawyers as project managers. [Greg Lambert](#) (3 Geeks and a Law Blog) sees two choices for project managers

(PMs) - former practicing lawyers or PMs, non-lawyers, who have experience working with lawyers. Richard Stout suggests in [The Spotlight Shines on Project Management](#), that there are different ways to approach this issue. He goes so far as to ask in a parenthetical ... "And who's to say PMs can't make partner in the law firm of the future?" I couldn't agree more.

Lawyer personality tests suggest that successful lawyers often share certain personality types. Is this a result of a self-selecting market? If law firms have always been managed in a particular way and lawyers have made partner because of similar criteria across firms, then it stands to reason that a "successful" lawyer (one who makes partner) will have similar characteristics across firms. What if the criteria change? What if one version of a successful lawyer is one who manages large projects more profitably than in the past? Or than others? If a lawyer is driving more revenue to the bottom line, isn't that as big, and sometimes bigger, a contribution than one who brings in a new, and frequently small, client? I would argue that it is.

-- Carla Landry, Washington DC