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LAW

Moritt Hock Plans Networking Shadowing For Associates

Marc L. Hamroff knows how to network.

The managing partner of Garden City law firm Moritt Hock Hamroff & Horowitz is a member of state and local bar associations and professional organizations, where he has held leadership positions. He publishes the firm's newsletter and edits and writes articles for a leasing newsletter.

Now he's going to teach his firm's junior attorneys everything he knows about networking.

The attorney is developing a mentoring program that will allow associates to shadow firm partners, internally known as "rainmakers." By September, associates may be shadowing at out-of-town conferences, networking events and executive dinners.

The initiative came about after an internal survey showed that young attorneys were interested in learning rainmaker social skills but weren't sure how to acquire them on their own.

Hamroff said the firm had an informal policy allowing associates to learn from partners, say, at national speaking engagements. But he's happy to offer the mentoring program as a development tool to help make the younger lawyers more complete and accomplished attorneys.

"We hire young lawyers directly out of law school," Hamroff said. "We want to train them, mentor them, so that they're long-term fixtures in our firm and so that they'll have an incentive to want to remain with us."

This will be Moritt Hock's second

formal mentoring program; under the first, the firm taught attorneys how to develop new client relationships and expand existing ones.

Reducing family strife

One Long Island elder law firm is seeing an exponential rise in "family agreements," aimed at preventing battles over estates.

Jericho-based law firm Genser Dubow Genser & Cona is making sure siblings agree before a parent transfers a home and assets to one of her children in order to qualify for Medicaid. Until a few years ago, the firm only saw one such case. Now it sees several.

So right now, partner Jennifer B. Cona is working on five family agreements, which replace trusts. According to the firm, this tool not only helps avoid Medicaid liens but also specifies how to split the inheritance in advance.

"Family agreements, made by the children, are a great way to mitigate disputes and legal battles among adult children when their parents die," Cona stated.

Assets are transferred to one child, who has access to them during the parent's lifetime. The agreement will specify how the assets should be distributed so there are no questions or arguments when the parent passes away, according to the firm.

Learning Rivkin Radler's secrets

Uniondale-based Rivkin Radler took its show on the road last week, teaching 200 lawyers, accountants and

financial professionals how to serve wealthy clients.

At the Citibank building in Manhattan, Rivkin Radler presented "Developing a High Net Worth Client Base," a program offered by The Scriptorium, a not-for-profit organization that provides work for people who have difficulty finding employment in conventional working environments.

The continuing legal education program, at which Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton keynoted, taught how to help clients save tax dollars, take advantage of charitable gift-giving opportunities, transition wealth and plan for their future. The law firm detailed the use of trusts to save taxes, estate tax exemptions, a disclaimer will versus the creation of a credit shelter trust, disability planning and marital trust planning, marital deductions outright or in trust and family planning with wills, including the immediate division of assets versus the Common Fund.

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