7 Reasons Young Lawyers are Better than Older Lawyers

**Summary:** There are many strong reasons why law firm managers should have as many young lawyers as older lawyers.

- Depending upon who you speak with, some respect age over youth when it comes to legal issues.
- Even so, whether a client favors a younger or older attorney, the main issue is to whom the legal issues at hand play to; an older attorney or younger attorney.
- This article explores the perceived advantages younger attorneys have over older attorneys, and how the client should have the final say based strictly on their legal needs.

One of your first responsibilities once you’ve become the manager of a law firm is to know who your law firm is. In other words, what is your law firm’s identity, and who does your law firm represent?

1. Are most of your clientele older or younger?
2. Are most of the lawyers in your firm older or younger?
3. Is there a match in the ages between the client and the attorney?

These are very important questions that need to be taken with deliberate seriousness.

Lawyers and clientele have to fit. They have to match. Generation gaps between one or the other simply do not work no matter how “allowing” a client or attorney may be.

In short, tribal people as we are, we like to be with our own kind.

And clients who feel particularly threatened in a legal sense will revert to that tribal way of thought, and from there, will distrust any representation from someone other than an attorney who most likely represents who they are in age, status and income.
What it comes down to is what makes the client comfortable, which, as a law firm manager, is your responsibility.

Younger Attorneys vs. Older Attorneys

Recently, Etzler & Associates LLP published an article that details why younger attorneys hold more advantage for a client than older attorneys. Granted, this is a subjective, yet important point of view, particularly as Etzler & Associates thoroughly stands behind their favoritism of younger attorneys over older attorneys.

Their article, Five Reasons You Should Hire A Young Attorney, explores the benefit of having younger attorneys in law firms as opposed to what might more likely be older attorneys who aren’t quite up to the physical, mental or emotional stamina needed to understand the socio-economic changes in the practice of today’s law. Those reasons are as follow.

1. **The Cost of Representation**

Young lawyers will not bill at the same rate as a lawyer with 20 years of experience. As well, a young lawyer is less likely to have minimums, such as billing for a 1/4 hours’ worth of work or a 3-minute phone conversation. Many younger attorneys report that there are older attorneys whose rate is nearly twice their own, and yet the achieved outcome for a client is no better.

With this said, clients of older more expensive attorneys don’t always get what they pay for. In essence, these clients shouldn’t assume they are getting a better lawyer because they are paying more.

In an economy where demand approaches marginal cost, shrinking profit margins require consumers and small business owners to be acutely aware of their business and personal budgets. Cutting legal costs can significantly reduce their overhead and make their product more competitive in a time when it is needed most.

2. **Better Communication**

Younger lawyers are able to devote more time to their clients and their issues. This contradicts the more seasoned lawyer who is often overwhelmed with a portfolio of clients he or she has built over his/her career.

This can conflict with efficient client communication in which weeks might pass for that seasoned lawyer to return a phone call, text or email.

Yes, there can be exceptions, but by and large, hiring a younger lawyer usually reduces response times. Young, fastidious lawyers are usually able to return phone calls within 24 hours. For most clients, that fast turnaround time makes the difference between a lawyer they hire once, or a lawyer who they retain for their legal needs over the course of a lifetime.

3. **Greater Availability**

As mentioned above, a younger lawyer generally has fewer clients. This means that young lawyer has more focus and energy for a smaller client pool, which can entail better service. He or she can dedicate more time to solving a client’s legal problem, and has fewer distractions from a multitude of clients.

A good example comes from criminal law. A successful, seasoned criminal defense lawyer often has their entire court call, which can involve a vast list of criminal defendants throughout an entire morning or afternoon. As well, in his or her plea meeting with the prosecutor, he or she is not discussing individual plea agreements—he or she is more likely discussing them by the batch. Because of this, it is more challenging to remember the details of each and every case, and is less likely to treat each case with the devoted attention it should receive.

The same can occur for class action or multi-plaintiff law suits.

4. **Aggressiveness**

A young lawyer is always looking to make a name for him/herself, especially if he or she is not connected to the existing "good ol' boys" network. Add to that the fact that many older lawyers often have animosity toward new members of their profession, which can cause a younger lawyer’s aggression to be raised to an even higher level.
Given this, younger lawyers are less likely to be intimidated or to compromise with the opposition, all of which goes to the favor of the younger lawyer’s client.

Younger lawyers are also more generally connected to each cause he or she advocates because he or she has not been desensitized by the high volume of cases of a seasoned lawyer. Because of this, a younger lawyer is more likely to zealously advocate on their clients’ behalf.

5. A Pencant for Innovation

Young lawyers are not as prone to burn out or cutting corners. Instead, an attorney who is new to the profession will often have as much expertise in their practice field as a seasoned lawyer, but may approach a case in a more creative way that can still end up as a positive solution for a client.

Another positive regarding the innovation of young lawyers is that they are closer to their legal education. This allows young lawyers to “think outside the box” and draw upon a greater legal imagination when looking to support a client’s position.

Younger attorneys have fresher minds and with that, can employ more inventive arguments from one client to the next, which may invariably help those clients succeed within a legal situation.

Two More Qualities

Here are two more qualities not listed in the Etzler & Associates article that can make attorneys more attractive to a client than an older attorney.

6. Better Social Understanding

Younger attorneys are more hip. They understand social awareness and diversity, whereas an older attorney may not realize the importance of social scenarios in these modern times.

Social media is another aspect of modern life that older attorneys may not fully understand while younger lawyers will feel as comfortable with Facebook, Twitter and other social platforms as an older attorney with pen and paper.

7. Higher Developed Peer Understanding

The world is changing. The politics between people have evolved and there are new causes that seem to crop up on almost a daily basis.

Understandably, a younger attorney will be closer to these causes simply by age than an older attorney. More importantly, a younger attorney will realize the implications these modern day causes may have on their clients, particularly younger clients.

In Conclusion

For every legal issue within any practice area, there can exist the perfect lawyer. Sure, as tribal as people are (or can become when faced with a legal issue) we naturally flock to our own kind for support and protection.

Much is the same with younger and older attorneys.

To a legal client, attorneys are who they are depending upon who the client is.

An older client will naturally feel more compatible with an older attorney while a younger client will readily see eye-to-eye with an attorney who is their own age and holds their own beliefs.

In the end, as a law firm manager, you have to step aside and let the client and attorney “connect.” It can’t be forced or arranged; both need to naturally find each other.

As for you, the law firm manager, the best you can do is have both younger and older attorneys on staff. It’s the one time when
hedging the bet is your best option for aged clientele as well as younger clients who have only recently realized the value of good strong legal advice and representation.

For more information, look into these articles:

- How and Why Do Law Firms Die, And What Can You as a Lawyer Do About It
- Are Your Law Firm Leaders Truly Leaders?
- The Parent/Legal Trap: The Challenges of Being Both a Parent and a Lawyer