



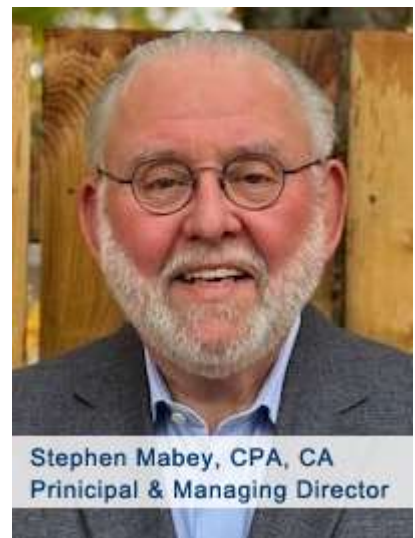
The Power of a Positive Culture in a Law Firm

In the highly competitive and demanding world of law, a positive and healthy work culture is critical. The impact of a positive culture is not limited to the lawyers but clearly has a direct effect on the productivity of the staff, too. A positive culture in a law firm will drive:

- People satisfaction,
- productivity, and,
- ultimately, success.

Law firms can create a positive culture by fostering the following:

- **An atmosphere of respect** - A positive culture in a law firm begins with creating a supportive work environment where lawyers and staff alike feel valued, respected, and empowered. Encouraging open communication, recognizing and rewarding achievements, and providing opportunities for development can all contribute to a sense of belonging and engagement among all law firm personnel. When people feel supported and appreciated,



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they are more likely to be motivated, productive, and loyal to the firm.

- **Collaboration at both the lawyer and staff levels** - Effective teamwork is essential in the legal profession, where cases often require a multidisciplinary approach. A positive culture in a law firm encourages collaboration among team members, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. By promoting open dialogue, sharing knowledge and expertise, and working together towards common goals, both lawyers and staff can leverage each other's strengths and achieve better outcomes for the clients.
- **The desired level of engagement and support** - Diversity and inclusion are essential components of a positive culture in a law firm. Embracing diversity in all its forms - including race, orientation, gender, age, background, and perspective - can create a more prosperous and dynamic workplace where different ideas and viewpoints are valued. By fostering an inclusive culture where everyone feels respected and supported, law firms can attract and retain top talent, drive innovation, and better serve a diverse client base.
- **Flexibility** - A reasonable work-life balance is critical for the well-being and productivity of a law firm. A positive culture promotes flexibility, autonomy, and understanding when it comes to balancing work commitments with personal and family responsibilities. By encouraging lawyers and staff to take time off, prioritize self-care, and recharge, law firms can reduce burnout, increase job satisfaction, and improve overall performance.

By fostering an environment of respect, collaboration, diversity, and work-life balance, law firms can create a workplace where people thrive.

There are other direct benefits achieved from investing in a positive culture, including clients receiving exceptional service and the firm achieving success and a highly desired reputation. As the legal profession continues to evolve, law firms that prioritize building and maintaining a positive culture will undoubtedly be better positioned to attract and retain top talent, drive innovation, and deliver exceptional service to their clients.

Many firms continuously seek to create that competitive difference by engaging outsiders and spending a lot of money and time trying to achieve it. The less expensive but much more practical solution is to build a positive culture from the inside out.

By recognizing the value of a positive work environment and making it a priority, law firms can create a culture that is recognized and envied both internally and externally.

David Cummings¹ captured the concept of the simplest way to create a sustainable competitive advantage with a quote attributed to him - "*... culture is the only sustainable competitive advantage that is completely within the control of the entrepreneur.*"

1. David Cummings, Co-Founder, Pardot

Who is Stephen Mabey?

Stephen Mabey is a CPA, CA, and Applied Strategies, Inc.'s Managing Director. His credentials include the following:

- Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management (one of 19 Canadians);
- Author of *Leading and Managing a Sustainable Law Firm: Tactics and Strategies for a Rapidly Changing Profession*, and *Key Performance Indicators An Introductory Guide* (Amazon);
- Over 25 years in a senior management role with Stewart McKelvey, a 220-lawyer, six-office Atlantic Canadian law firm;

- Over 14 years providing advice and counsel to small to mid-size law firms on a broad range of issues;
- A panelist and facilitator of the Managing Partner Information Exchange ("MPIE") at the annual Managing Partner Forum Leadership Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, each May;
- Runs a group mailing list that circulates articles, directly and indirectly, impacting law firms.

Stephen has advised law firms on a wide range of law firm issues, including - strategic action planning, leadership, understudy (succession) planning, business development, capitalization of partnerships, partnership agreements, lawyer & staff engagement, marketing, key performance indicators, competitive intelligence, finance, mergers, practice transitioning, compensation arrangements, organizational structures, and partnership arrangements.

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