

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR LAW FIRM MARKETING/BD PROFESSIONALS

By Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc.

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Now is a terrific time to be in the legal marketing profession. Firms are putting increased importance and demand on their marketing departments, hiring more personnel with greater latitude and responsibility. As the requirements for these positions change, so too does the way in which legal marketing and business development professionals need to manage their own professional development.

To help legal marketers focus their growth and development, Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc. (WCE) has created a Core Competency Model for law firm marketing and business development professionals, highlights of which are presented below.

WCE's model breaks legal marketing down into the **three critical areas** of skills, client service aptitude and professionalism. The core marketing **skills** are communication – both written and interpersonal – problem-solving, technology and research, and project management. The latter two especially are new developments for the industry.

Technological advances, including the preponderance of internet research and the rise of social media marketing, have forced many professionals, especially those in marketing and business development, to adapt to new methods of collecting and

presenting data. In a recent workshop hosted by the New York Legal Marketing Association, law firm CMOs and legal recruiters alike touted the importance of continued development of technological skills. The importance of your ability to understand current electronic systems and quickly master updates and advancements cannot be understated in today's tech-centric global market.

The demand for project management skills is also increasing due to current trends toward team-based project work. What you know and do is no longer the sole component – you



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must be able to learn and perform alongside team members with different backgrounds and abilities. This requires attention to detail, organization, a future and big picture orientation as well as the ability to communicate and collaborate across departmental, cultural and sometimes even geographical divides.

Professionalism and a client service orientation have, of course, always been integral to marketing. Yet these two core competency areas are also shifting. **Client service aptitude** means not only directly servicing clients, but also aiding your firm's attorneys and helping them become better equipped to handle client needs.

Very much tied to clients' needs is the specific area of **professionalism** that WCE has illuminated, business and legal industry knowledge. This is another new ability being demanded of legal marketing professionals. General legal industry and client-specific industry acumen and insight are necessary for both lawyers and the business development

professionals within firms. It is important to understand your firm's specialties, the clients your lawyers work with, and the problems those clients and their industries face. A service mentality and professional image go a long way for marketers attempting to persuade and influence their lawyers and clients.

"It has become imperative that you are both a generalist and an expert in your clients' industries."

Law firms and their marketing departments are becoming increasingly specialized and it has become imperative that you are both a generalist and an expert in your clients' industries in order to better serve the firm's needs. Being a marketing or BD professional

includes being proactive and intellectually curious; independently researching trends and competitors that matter to your lawyers and clients. A good legal marketer should have a strong enough knowledge base to be able to enter a client meeting asking insightful questions that help focus clients and attorneys on the real issues and challenges they are facing.

Among the new expectations of legal



marketing and business development professionals is the expectation that you will own your professional development. To stay relative and in high-demand, it is crucial for marketers and business developers to evaluate their current skills and develop goals to expand on them. How do your capabilities in the areas of marketing skills, client service and professionalism match with your current position? What about your hoped-for position?

Through this Core Competency Model, complete with behavioral indicators at each job level from Assistant to Director, Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc. aims to provide our friends in the legal marketing industry with benchmarks to guide your professional development. A visual summary of the three critical competency areas and their main components is presented below.

As always, it is our goal to help you achieve your goals. We look forward to using this Competency Model with you to develop new ways to reach those goals.



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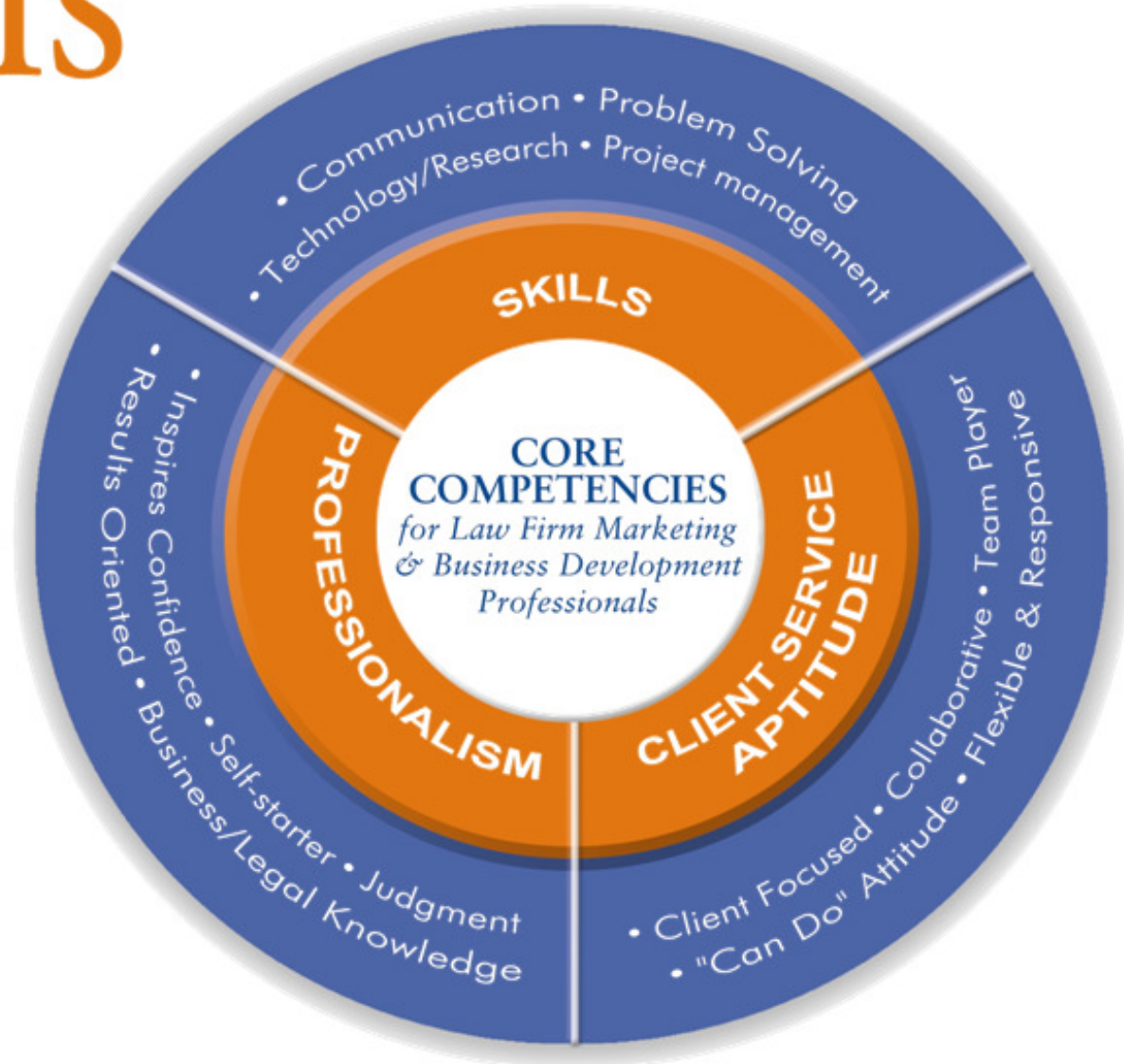
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Our goal is to help you achieve your

goals



Wisnik Core Competencies

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