

Moving In Place: Four Steps to Creating More Satisfaction in Your Current Job

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February 8, 2017 By [Susanne Aronowitz](#)

Life is good. You are one of those seemingly rare attorneys who are content at work. You feel a sense of mastery (or at least competence) over the subject matter you handle, you have a good relationship with your peers, and the compensation meets your needs. Your employment provides the stability that you crave. You have no desire to change the status quo. Yet when you notice that your colleagues in other offices are jockeying for some bigger-and-better opportunity you start to wonder whether you should aspire to climb the corporate ladder. But what if you don't want to? Or what if you'd like to grow, but are at an organization that does not offer a ladder to climb?

Is it ok for an attorney to simply stay put?

In short, yes. But to avoid burnout and boredom, and to continue adding value to your internal and external clients, it is helpful to find ways to develop and grow, even when staying in place.

The good news is that the strategies you can use to avoid stagnation are easy to add to your plate. In fact, by engaging with issues that excite you, or by seeking opportunities for connection and leadership, you can infuse your professional life with energy. And in the event your work circumstances change, this approach will put you in a better position to successfully navigate a job transition.

The key is to find activities that are intrinsically interesting to you. Here is a menu of ideas to consider; select the ones that resonate most with you:

1. **Continue to build and showcase your expertise**

Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned veteran, be a curious consumer of the legal issues in your practice and trends in your clients' industries. Set aside a period of time each day or week to review the legal press and bar association newsletters. Subscribe to topical legal blogs, and actually **read** the posts. (The ABA has an [excellent directory of legal blogs](#) for you to explore.) Listen to podcasts during your commute or view webinars on your lunch hour. Figure out what your favorite mode of delivery is, and seek out material that suits you.

Consider sharing your knowledge by writing for the very resources you are consuming; many of them thrive on volunteer submissions. Or consider writing for non-legal publications where you can offer your expertise to a lay audience. If you are more of a talker than a writer, consider speaking on topics of mutual interest at bar association meetings or community groups. These are effective ways of connecting with others who share your passions, displaying your expertise, and raising your professional profile. They can also help you provide a more interesting answer to the tired “what are you up to” question you will inevitably receive at social and networking functions.

2. Deepen your skill set

To represent your clients effectively, it is essential that you continue to deepen your skill set. Look at what attorneys who are senior to you in your office are doing to identify gaps in your skills, and design an action plan to build in these areas. Take the initiative at work to seek new responsibilities that expand your repertoire. Consider pro bono opportunities to gain more experience in direct client representation. Seek out CLE courses that focus on skill building and training.

3. Expand your circle of contacts

Practicing law can be very isolating. While this is particularly true for solo practitioners, attorneys in larger organizations can also struggle to find trusted colleagues. By expanding your professional community, you are likely to find mentors, new peers who share your interests, potential client referrals and opportunities for leadership.

Start by tending the network you’ve already established. Reconnect with old colleagues, supervisors, law school professors and mentors with a holiday card, email message or invitation to get together for lunch or coffee. Join professional, industry and community associations that relate to your professional or personal interests and seek ways to get involved by serving on a committee or task force. If you are seeking something that requires less bandwidth, join virtual groups on LinkedIn and other platforms that provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and build a presence within your professional community.

4. Seek leadership opportunities within and outside of your organization

One of the best ways to solidify your own skills and knowledge is to train and support others. Volunteer to mentor junior colleagues or people new to your organization. Serve as a mentor through bar associations or community groups. Investing in someone else’s success tends to add a residual effect to your own.

Consider mentoring “up” by noticing the tasks that vex senior colleagues. Are they struggling with technology? Procrastinating on writing that law journal article or preparing that bar association presentation? Avoiding the preparation for a client pitch meeting? Volunteer to help with the projects that they find burdensome. These are easy ways to

showcase your value to your employer and solidify relationships with key stakeholders. By adding more value to your current organization, you enhance your worth to them while building more variety into how you spend your day.

Getting Started

Enhancing your professional life with new activities does not have to be hard or time consuming. Identify two or three items from this article that you want to incorporate into your routine. Be specific: what steps do you want to take, and when will you take them? Even better, find a colleague who is similarly motivated, and serve as accountability partners for each other. Share your goals and outcomes with each other. Articulate for each other how these activities will add value to your professional portfolio. In addition to celebrating your successes, you may even find some new sources of inspiration.