

Your Changing World

Transitioning from New Lawyer to Seasoned Litigator

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Panel

- Sarah Andrzejczak, Buchalter
 - Sarah helps businesses establish and defend lawful workplace policies and also litigate broader B2B contract disputes and tortious conduct. She has been practicing for 9 years, which includes a clerkship with the Colorado Court of Appeals and significant experience litigating a wide variety of insurance defense matters.
- Matt Cecil, Sutton Booker
 - Matt works for a boutique civil defense firm in Denver, Colorado, where his practice focuses on general liability and first-party insurance bad faith. He has been practicing for eight years and previously worked for a large Midwest insurance defense firm based in St. Louis.
- Emily M. Miller, Nathan Dumm & Mayer, P.C.
 - Emily is a not quite native Coloradan and partner at Nathan Dumm & Mayer, P.C., a civil defense firm in the Denver Tech Center. She has been practicing law for eight years and her practice is primarily in construction defect, personal injury, employment, and land-use defense.

How to improve as “new” attorney

- Seek out learning opportunities
- Communicate and ask questions
- Learn preferences/expectations of supervising attorneys, clients, judges
- Become a smart biller
- Time management
- Think big picture
- Soft skills - be a good person and foster professional relationships

“Getting ahead”

- Consider and communicate your goals
- Identify the expectations of your firm
- Communicate with firm leaders about expectations and progress toward your goals
- Track your contributions
- Own your case files and manage your caseload
- Mentorship
- Professional community involvement

Tips and tricks - Problems

- “Older” attorneys steamrolling, belittling, or ignoring you
- Learning how to communicate in a professional environment
- Time management
- Lack of knowledge and experience

Tips and tricks - Solutions

- “Older” attorneys steamrolling, belittling, or ignoring you - never mirror bad behavior
 - Take time to collect your thoughts and educate yourself
 - Don’t assume they’re right! Seek assistance from other attorneys when needed
- Learning how to communicate in a professional environment - be professional!
- Time management - communicate about expectations
 - Identify what you can control, and what you can’t
- Lack of knowledge and experience - always be learning

Hypotheticals

- Senior attorney called away on emergency asks you to cover a discovery dispute court appearance last minute. Senior attorney says it is an easy issue, but you are only vaguely familiar with the case details and general nature of the dispute and do not feel you have the time to review the case file or applicable law in detail.
- You have two large Motions due in three days and are unsure if you can do both.
- In a deposition of your client, more experienced opposing counsel is being aggressive toward you and your client and making representations you suspect are not true.
- A 6-year practitioner with the same firm since passing the bar has considerable autonomy/responsibility in managing caseload and wants to become a partner but doesn't know how to be seen as a leader at the firm

Questions?

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