

Lane Powell recognized the need to invest in their leadership. The firm had an exceptionally deep and talented bench of lawyers and they knew that wasn't sufficient. They needed to grow the next generation of firm leadership, ensure a smooth transition for Barbara Duffy into the role of President and grow the firm's business. Two years after engaging with Oyster, Lane Powell achieved one of their best years in decades.

Lane Powell is a highly respected Pacific Northwest-based law firm. They've been successful for more than 140 years and are no strangers to navigating challenging times. Like many industries today, the legal profession is undergoing a period of tremendous disruption forcing firms to adapt and learn how to thrive in a new business environment.

Challenge

Lane Powell is known for its deep and successful history in the Pacific Northwest. At the same time the firm's leaders knew they couldn't rest on their laurels. The legal profession is undergoing a period of profound change and having an exceptionally talented group of lawyers is no longer sufficient. The firm recognized the need to invest in their top leadership to grow the next generation of leaders and grow the business.

Goal

The engagement goals were two-fold. First, to invest in the development of the firm's most senior leaders to advance the firm's short and medium-term business success. Second, to develop the next generation of leaders by providing a foundation to enrich their leadership culture. These leaders are responsible for results of the practice teams across the firm.

Strategy

At the senior leadership level, Oyster provided 1:1 executive coaching and advised on the implementation of core governance and employee-related processes. These included a firm-wide vision and goal setting process including the implementation of OKR's (Objectives and Key Results). We also advised on the implementation of an employee engagement strategy and process.

Here is what President Barbara Duffy had to say about the impact of the OKR's:

It starts with the goal setting and then helping me to be much more focused on execution and getting it done. Framing decisions in terms of what does that do to advance our goals and it has given me clarity. One of the things that we've done that's very new to our organization is we are quite transparent with the goals we put out there. I think that transparency has helped much of the organization become more energized about knowing which way we're going and then people figure out how they fit into it.

A leadership development program was implemented for the Practice Team Leaders. It consisted of six 2-hour sessions covering the Foundations of Effective Leadership. The program was highly experiential enabling the leaders to immediately practice what they learned back on the job. The program was very well received and shifted the mindset of the leaders. As Barbara noted:

"There's an awareness of the importance of strong leadership at the practice team level that I haven't seen before."

Results

Barbara Duffy describes the firm's results during her first year as President:

"I feel like we have created engagement where people are much more focused on working together. I can't pinpoint the exact impact, but our results last year were some of the best in decades and our earnings exceeded our targets by over 26% and we increased our revenue per lawyer by more than 11%. We just had a really fantastic year!"

Barbara also described how the coaching helped her develop a broader firm-wide perspective and better engage the resources and talent around her:

"The most important thing that I took from coaching is it allowed me to transform my goal setting which has been somewhat micro. It allowed me to pull other resources into the implementation of the [firm's] goals. In effect, multiplying myself and expanding my reach."