

THE LAW FIRM OF THE FUTURE

BUILDING THE VIRTUAL LAW FIRM

An MPF Webinar – October 21, 2020

by

Uri Gutfreund

Law Firm Group Leader, Risk Strategies Company

Michael Moradzadeh, Esq.

Founding Partner and CEO, Rimon Law

John Remsen, Jr.

President, TheRemsenGroup

Christopher T. Wilson, Esq.

Partner-in-Charge of Hybrid Remote Model
Taylor English

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POWERED BY

TheRemsenGroup
Smart Strategies for the Forward Thinking Law Firm

TheRemsenGroup.com

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Uri Gutfreund

National Law Firm Practice Leader
Risk Strategies Company
New York, New York
212.826.9744 – ugutfreund@risk-strategies.com

Uri Gutfreund is The National Law Firm Practice Leader at Risk Strategies Company, a top 25 national insurance brokerage and The Founder and Moderator of The Managing Partner Round Table™, a regional peer-to-peer professional development group. This unique program has quickly become a leading venue for thought leaders in the legal industry.

At Risk Strategies, Uri is responsible for the development and execution of all insurance and risk management services to the company's law firm clients. He oversees all law firm specialty areas including: Health, Professional Liability, Property and Casualty, Cyber and EPLI. His practice leadership combines 20 years personal experience with cutting edge innovation remaking law firm insurance programs using the latest technology, peer benchmarking, and real-time best practices to serve the company's law firm clients.

He has been a Registered Professional Liability Underwriter since 2001 and a frequent speaker and is a writer on law firm leadership, law firm business practices and insurance and risk management at national and regional conferences.

September 2020

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

John Remsen, Jr.

President

TheRemsenGroup

Atlanta, Georgia

404.885.9100 – jremsen@therem sengroup.com

John Remsen, Jr., is widely recognized as one of the country's leading authorities on law firm leadership, management, marketing and business development. Since 1997 TheRemsenGroup has consulted with more than 400 law firms and thousands of law firm leaders to help them develop and implement long-term strategic objectives to improve cohesiveness, profitability and sustainability.

John is a frequent speaker and author on law-firm leadership and marketing topics. He has spoken at national and regional conferences of the Legal Marketing Association, Association of Legal Administrators, American Bar Association, and numerous state and local bar associations. His articles have appeared in dozens of highly respected legal publications, including the *ABA Journal*, *Law Practice Management*, *Law Practice Today*, *Law360*, *Legal Management*, *Marketing for Lawyers*, *Marketing the Law Firm*, *Managing Partner*, *National Law Review* and *New York Law Journal*.

Since 1988, John has been an active member of the Legal Marketing Association, and he has served as President of LMA's Southeastern Chapter, Executive Editor of *Strategies* (LMA's newsletter) and a member of LMA's national Board of Directors. He is also an active member of the Association of Legal Administrators and a popular speaker at ALA meetings and conferences.

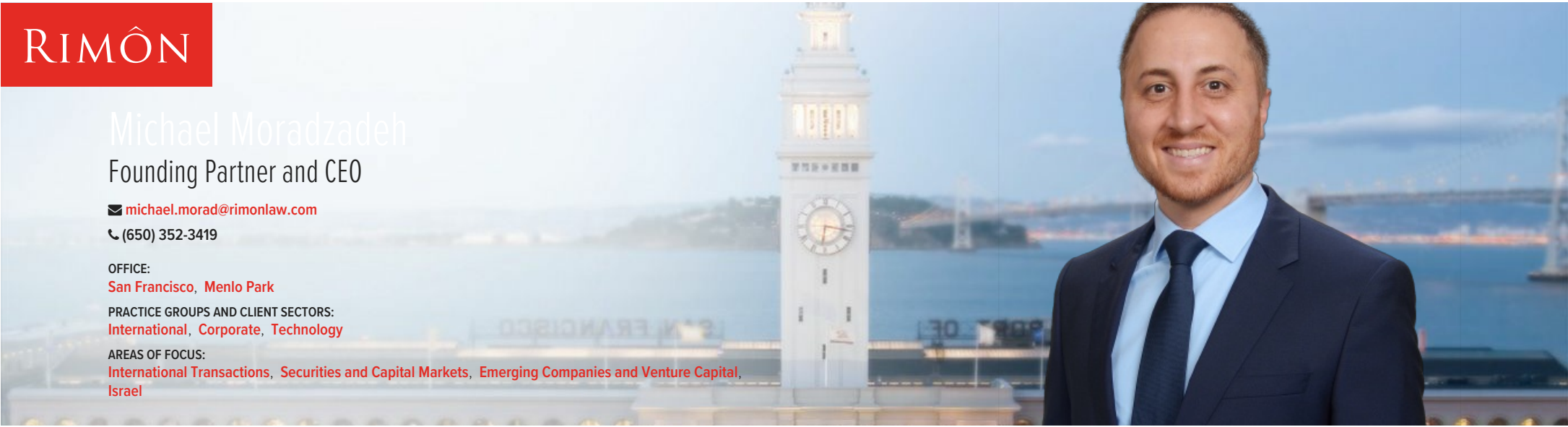
In 2002, John created The Managing Partner Forum, a highly acclaimed conference series and community for managing partners and law firm leaders. More than 1,200 firm leaders from 900 law firms and 43 states have participated in 26 conferences. In addition, John distributes *The MPF Weekly*, an electronic newsletter to more than 10,500 firm leaders throughout the U.S., Canada and 28 other countries.

John's influence was underscored when he was inducted as a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management in 2013, in recognition of his 25 years of demonstrated expertise in law firm leadership and management. Founded in 1994, the College honors those who "inspire excellence and innovation in law practice management." Membership is by invitation only and includes just 200 individuals.

And the College was not alone: in 2016, John was recognized by LawDragon as one of the "Top 100 Consultants and Strategists" to the legal profession; and in 2017, John was recognized as one of the world's top "leaders and influencers" in the business of law by the Association of International Law Firm Networks.

A native of West Palm Beach, Florida, John holds an MBA from The University of Virginia (1985) and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida (1980). Prior to enrolling in graduate school, John was Executive Director of The Florida Council of 100, an organization comprised of Florida's top CEOs and other business leaders.

September 2020



Michael Moradzadeh
Founding Partner and CEO

✉ michael.morad@rimonlaw.com
☎ (650) 352-3419

OFFICE:
San Francisco, Menlo Park
PRACTICE GROUPS AND CLIENT SECTORS:
International, Corporate, Technology

AREAS OF FOCUS:
International Transactions, Securities and Capital Markets, Emerging Companies and Venture Capital, Israel

EDUCATION

- ▶ Columbia University
School of Law, J.D. with Honors (Harlan Fiske Stone scholar); Editor, Columbia Journal of European Law; Assistant Editor, Columbia Journal of International Affairs
- ▶ University of California, Berkeley
B.A. Phi Beta Kappa, with Departmental and General Honors; graduated in three years
- ▶ Universitat Ben Gurion Ba-Negev

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Ropes & Gray, LLP
- ▶ US Attorney's Office in San Francisco
- ▶ EZ Web Mall (Co-founder and CEO)
- ▶ Napster
- ▶ Checkpoint Software

BARS & COURTS

- ▶ Admitted in California
- ▶ Admitted in the District of Columbia

LANGUAGES

- ▶ English
- ▶ Farsi

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Michael Moradzadeh is a Founding Partner and the CEO of Rimon. He is in charge of strategic partnerships and recruiting for the firm.

Mr. Moradzadeh has presented on innovations in law firm management and business models at Harvard Law School, Stanford Law School, UC Berkeley Law School, and UC Hastings College of the Law. Mr. Moradzadeh has also presented to the board of directors of global law firms to help them innovate their own structures.

Mr. Moradzadeh's innovations with Rimon have received awards from the Financial Times and the American Bar Association Journal and have appeared in a wide array of international publications, including the Economist, the Atlantic, the Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, the American Lawyer Magazine, the National Law Journal, American Bar Association Magazine, the National Post, Bloomberg, Law & More, Legal Management Magazine, the San Francisco and Los Angeles Daily Journals, the San Francisco Business Times, the Silicon Valley Business Journal, American Lawyer's Law Technology News, Law 360, and eLawyering. Mr. Moradzadeh was recognized by the American Bar Association Journal as a top innovator in the law and awarded the Legal Rebel distinction.

Mr. Moradzadeh's practice focuses on technology company representation and international transactions. He represents both companies and investors in investment rounds and stock sales. He has worked on deals ranging from small angel investments to representing a private equity firm in a \$6 billion acquisition. He is also heavily involved in secondary markets of private stock, representing sellers of restricted stock in *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Zynga*, *SolarCity*, *Dropbox*, *Bloom Energy*, *Gilt Groupe*, *Etsy* and other pre-IPO companies. Internationally, Mr. Moradzadeh represented Bain Capital and Morgan Stanley in their international investment funds and has worked with foreign counsel in 130 jurisdictions on several international securities deals. He also worked on an IPO of a technology company, 10-K and 10-Q filings of several publicly traded companies, and serves as a corporate officer of two non-profit robotics corporations.

Prior to Rimon, Mr. Moradzadeh practiced corporate law at Ropes & Gray, LLP in San Francisco. Mr. Moradzadeh also worked at the United States Attorney's Office in San Francisco. Before law school, Mr. Moradzadeh worked for several high-tech companies in the Silicon Valley including Napster and Check Point Software, as well as Silicon Valley law firms Capstone Law Group and Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. Mr. Moradzadeh also co-founded EZ Web Mall in 1997.

Mr. Moradzadeh lives in San Mateo, California with his wife and three children.

PUBLICATIONS

- ▶ *Disrupting the Law Firm Model: A collection of published materials on why the traditional law firm must change*



CHRISTOPHER T. WILSON

Partner

1600 Parkwood Circle, Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30339
678.426.4656
cwilson@taylorenghish.com

I chose Taylor English because of flexibility and the opportunity to work at a law firm focused on the future.

Christopher T. Wilson focuses his practice on corporate and finance legal issues. He has experience in private practice and as in-house counsel representing small and large companies in a variety of legal related matters. While in-house, he was responsible for all legal issues related to the finance and accounting, information systems and services, research and development, and manufacturing divisions. He has extensive experience with consulting agreements, confidentiality agreements, research agreements, toll manufacturing agreements, and license agreements. Mr. Wilson also has extensive experience with mergers and acquisitions and capital investments. He has negotiated and drafted asset purchase agreements, stock purchase agreements, merger agreements, shareholder agreements, and a wide variety of ancillary and supporting documents. He has also drafted and negotiated a wide variety of corporate contracts in multiple industries where his clients operate and is well versed in corporate formation and corporate governance issues.

Mr. Wilson also has extensive experience representing borrowers and lenders in a variety of financial transactions, both secured and unsecured, including real estate financing, acquisition financing, asset-based financing, leveraged finance transactions, factoring, leasing, and loan facilities for letters of credit. He has extensive experience structuring, drafting and negotiating loan and security documents and ancillary supporting documentation related to such financial transactions, including syndicated loan facility documents and specialty finance documents. Prior to entering into the practice of law, Mr. Wilson was a banker for Bank of America, N.A., where he was responsible for a loan portfolio in excess of \$100 million.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia, Board of Advisors

SERVICES

Corporate and Business
Financial Institutions
Lending and Corporate Finance

EDUCATION

Georgia State University, JD, 1999
University of Georgia, MBA,
Finance, 1992
Wake Forest University, BA,
History, 1990

BAR ADMISSIONS

Georgia

Christopher T. Wilson

TedX Peachtree, Board of Directors

Southeastern Train Museum, Board of Directors

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Addressing How Law Firm Roles Are Evolving, CLE Session, The Legal Business Strategy Program, February 5, 2020

HEADLINES

"Law Firms Simply Do Not Need the Physical Space They Currently Occupy": Taylor English's Chris Wilson on Why Offices Are Becoming Obsolete," Legal Speak Podcast , September 25, 2020

"It's All About Communication': A Recap Of Law.com's Do We Need Offices Twitter Chat," Law.com, August 19, 2020

"Already Out of the Office, Talent Flocks to Distributed Firms," The American Lawyer, August 12, 2020

"How 'Hybrid Remote' Works for Midsize Taylor English," ALM Mid-Market Report, June 2, 2020

How To 'Optimize' Your Legal Career To Change if You Want To, *LawFuel*, February 28, 2020

How to 'Optimize' Your Legal Career—So You Can Eventually Change It, *Law360*, February 7, 2020

The Viable Alternative to BigLaw Has Arrived — Virtual Law, *Attorney at Law Magazine*, March 6, 2019

"Bench & Bar," *Georgia Bar Journal*, August 2017

"Taylor English Duma Adds Three Attorneys," *Marietta Daily Journal*, June 1, 2017

"Werdesheim Goes From Defending Lawyers to Suing Them—and Other 'On the Move' News," *Daily Report*, May 31, 2017

"Taylor English Adds Three Attorneys," *City Biz List*, May 26, 2017

"Taylor English Adds Three Attorneys to Support Strategic Growth," *Patch Media*, May 26, 2017

NEWS RELEASES

Taylor English Adds Three Attorneys To Support Strategic Growth, May 22, 2017

MPF WEBINAR

The Law Firm of the Future

**Managing Partner Forum®**
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The MPF Webinar Series: The Law Firm of the Future
Building the Virtual Law Firm
An MPF Webinar with Michael Moradzadeh and Chris Wilson
October 21, 2020 – 2:00-3:00pm ET





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**Managing Partner Forum®**
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John Remsen, Jr.

- President, TheRemsenGroup
- President & CEO, Managing Partner Forum
- Strategic Planning, Marketing/Business Development, Firm Retreats, COO/CMO Search
- Fellow, College of Law Practice Management
- Speaker:
 - American Bar Association
 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - Legal Marketing Association
 - MPF Annual Conference
 - Law Firm Networks
- Education:
 - University of Virginia – MBA
 - University of Florida – BSBA



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Managing Partner Forum®
ADVANCING THE BUSINESS OF LAW



Uri Gutfreund

- National Law Firm Practice Leader, Risk Strategies Company
- Founder, The Managing Partner Roundtable
- Speaker:
 - American Bar Association
 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - Managing Partner Summit
 - MPF Annual Conference
 - Law Firm Networks
- Education:
 - Yeshiva University – BA



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Michael Moradzadeh

- Founding Partner and CEO, Rimon Law
- 130+ lawyers in ten countries and five continents
- Strategic partnerships and recruiting
- Technology and international transactional lawyer
- Ropes & Gray, US Attorney's Office in San Francisco
- Several high-tech companies, including Napster
- Education:
 - Columbia University – JD
 - UC Berkeley – BA



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Chris Wilson

- Partner-Hybrid Business Model, Taylor English
- 180+ lawyers based in Atlanta, Georgia
- Corporate and business lawyer
- Troutman Pepper, FisherBroyles
- Education:
 - Georgia State University – JD
 - University of Georgia – MBA
 - Wake Forest University – BA, History



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TODAY'S SESSION

- Opening Remarks
- Registrant Survey Results
- Comments from Michael and Chris
- Group Discussion
- Audience Polling and Questions
- Recording and Handout Materials



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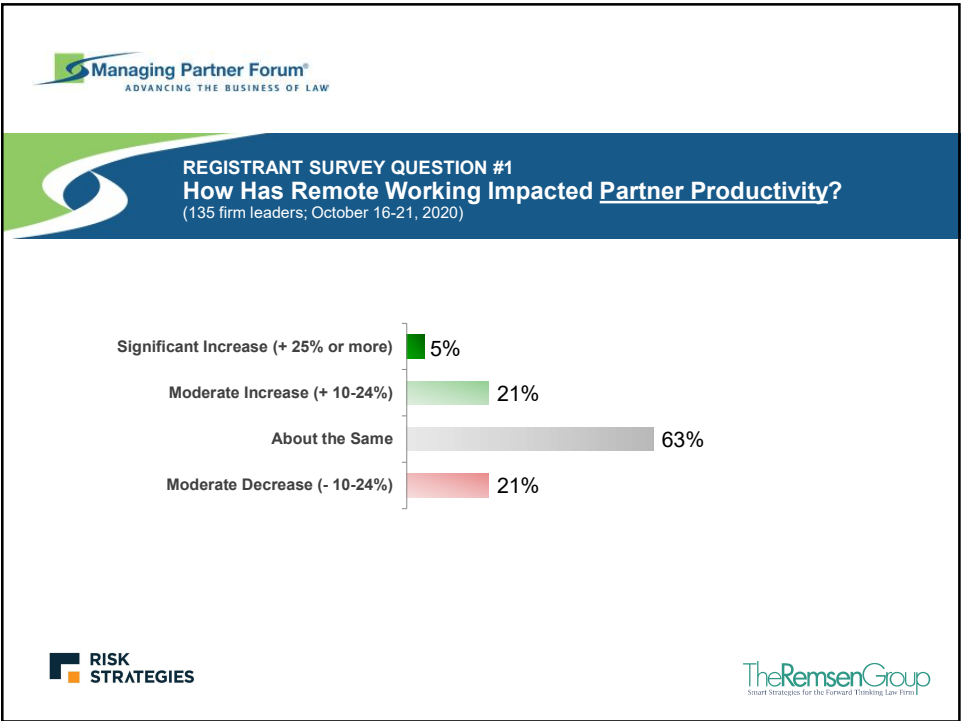
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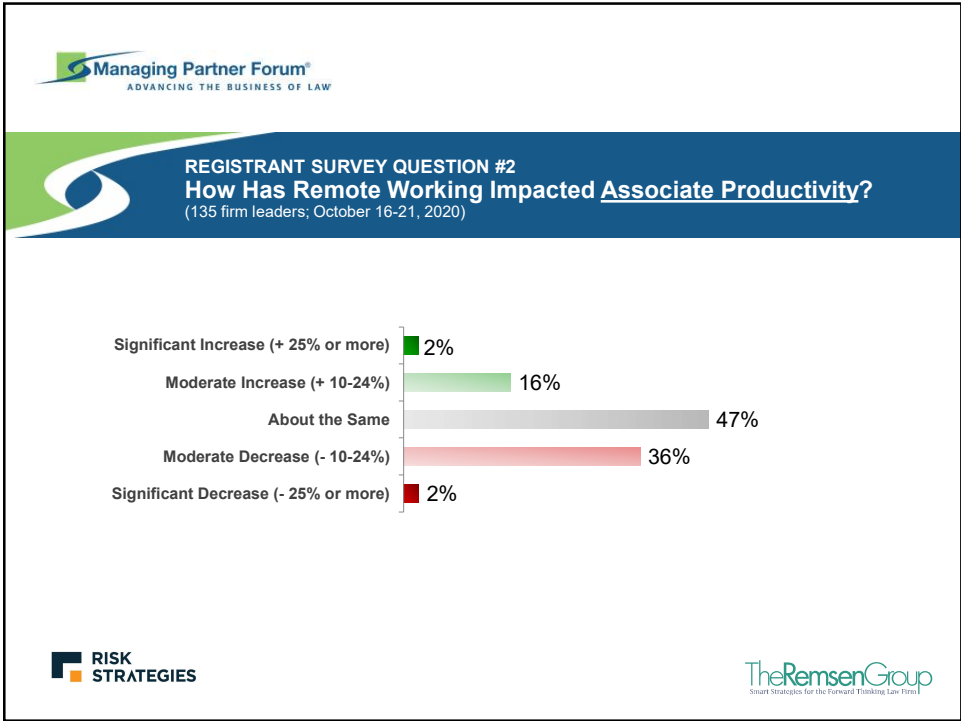


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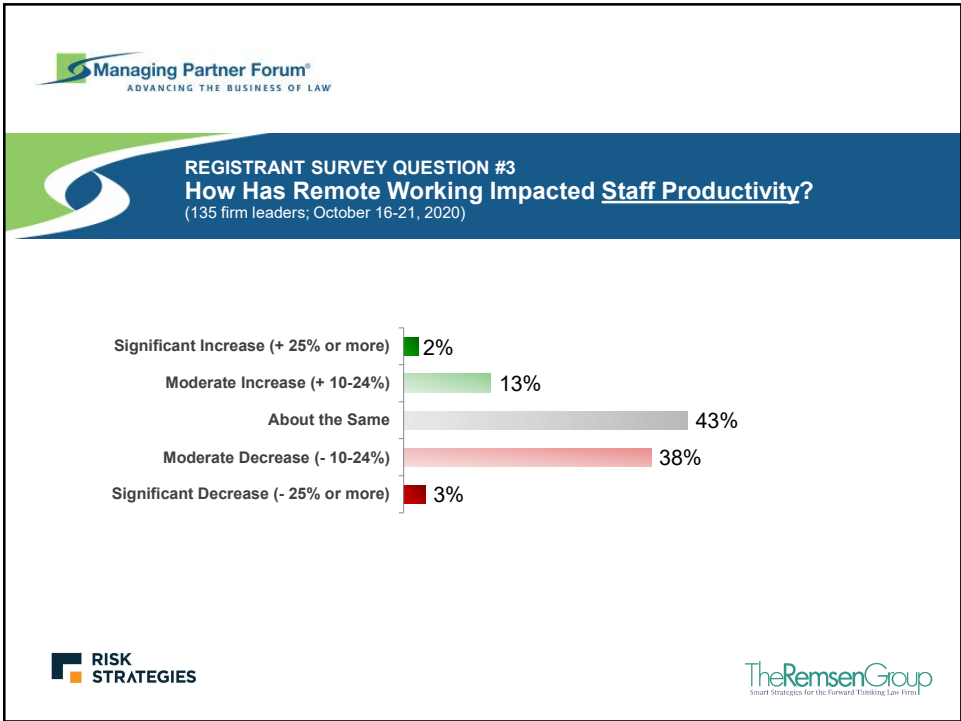


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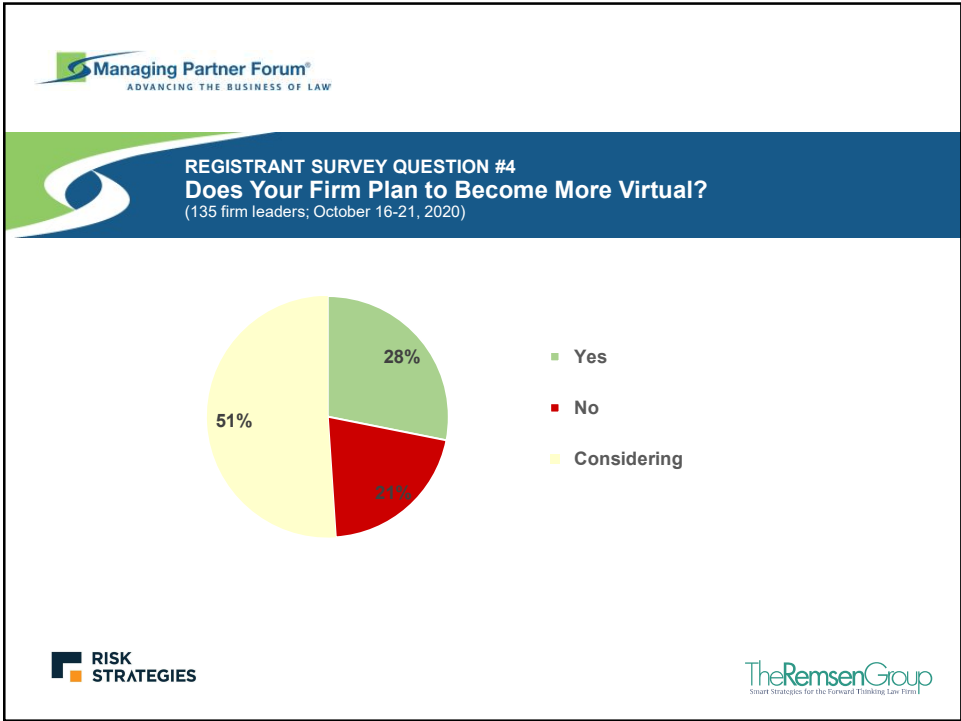


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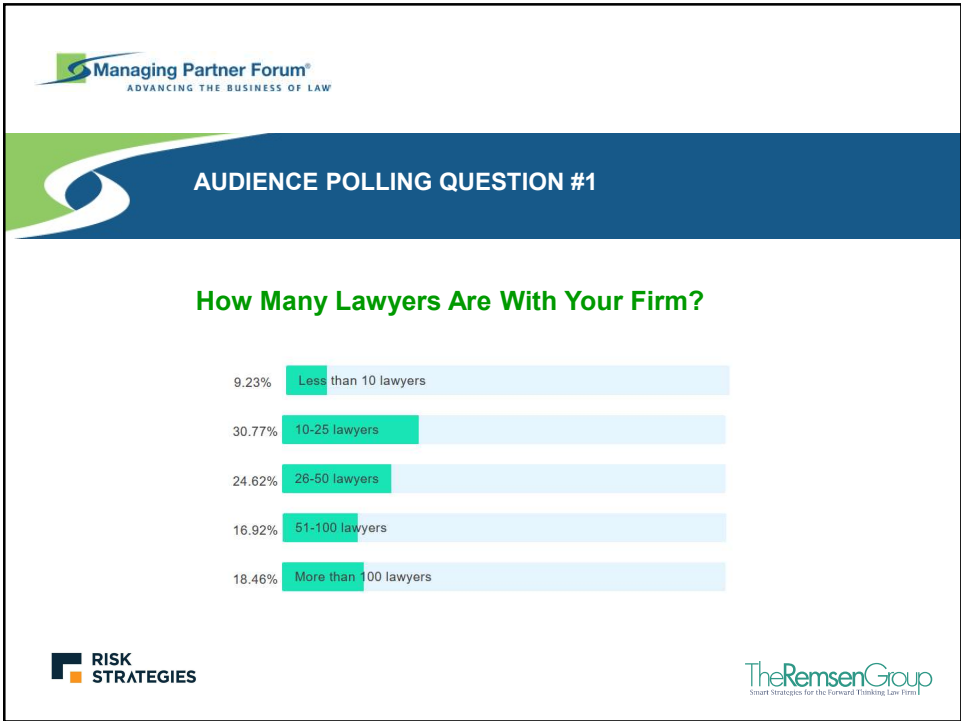


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ABOUT RIMON LAW

- Built from scratch as the optimal modern law firm in 2008
- Allows greater flexibility, collaboration and quality with lower overhead
- Moved to hybrid approach in 2011
- Initially focused on technology companies, then full service
- Started global expansion in 2016

RIMON

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ABOUT TAYLOR ENGLISH

- 180+ lawyers with 15 office locations
- Central operations based in Atlanta, Georgia
- Began bulging hybrid business model in 2017
- Chris Wilson, formerly of FisherBroyles, leading the initiative

taylor | english

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INITIAL COMMENTS FROM MICHAEL AND CHRIS

- Remote work has lots of benefits, including great productivity, when the firm's culture is built around it.
- Remote work requires the appropriate infrastructure.
- It is much harder to work with junior associates in a remote setup.
- More thought and attention needs to go to collaboration.
- A hybrid approach is best.

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20 TOP STRATEGIES FOR '21

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Live Polling Question

How important is "culture" to the long-term success of your law firm?

84.16%	Very important
13.86%	Somewhat important
0.99%	Not important
0.99%	Not sure

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AUDIENCE POLLING QUESTION #2

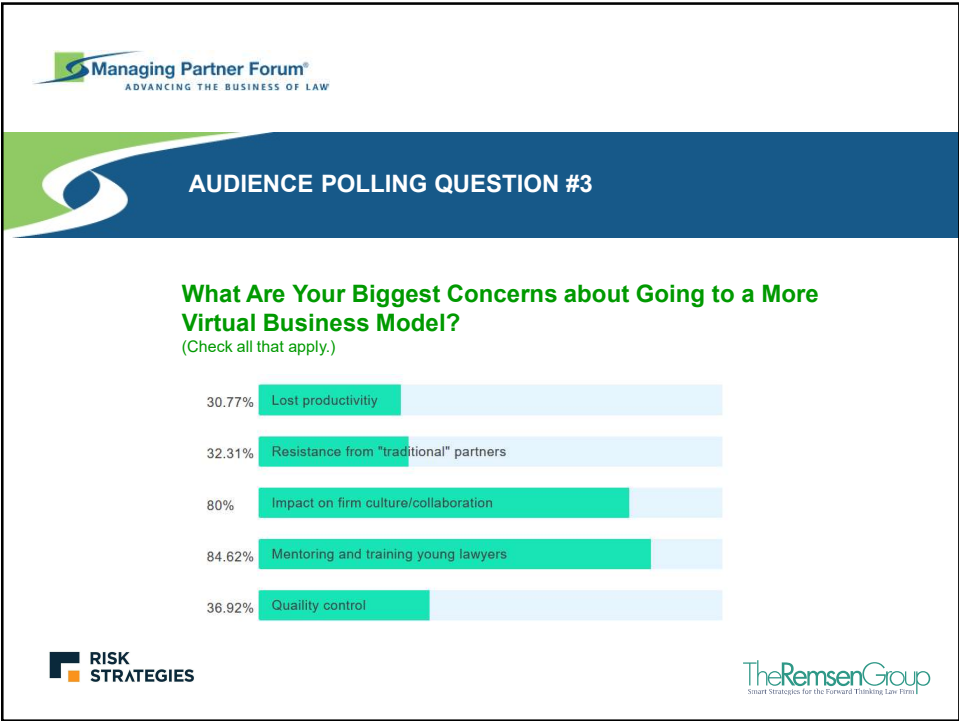
What Are the Main Reasons Why Your Firm is Considering a Move Toward a More Virtual Business Model?

43.48%	Our lawyers want it	3
10.14%	Our support staff wants it	
5.8%	Increase productivity	
36.23%	Lower rent/overhead	2
4.35%	Other law firms are doing it	



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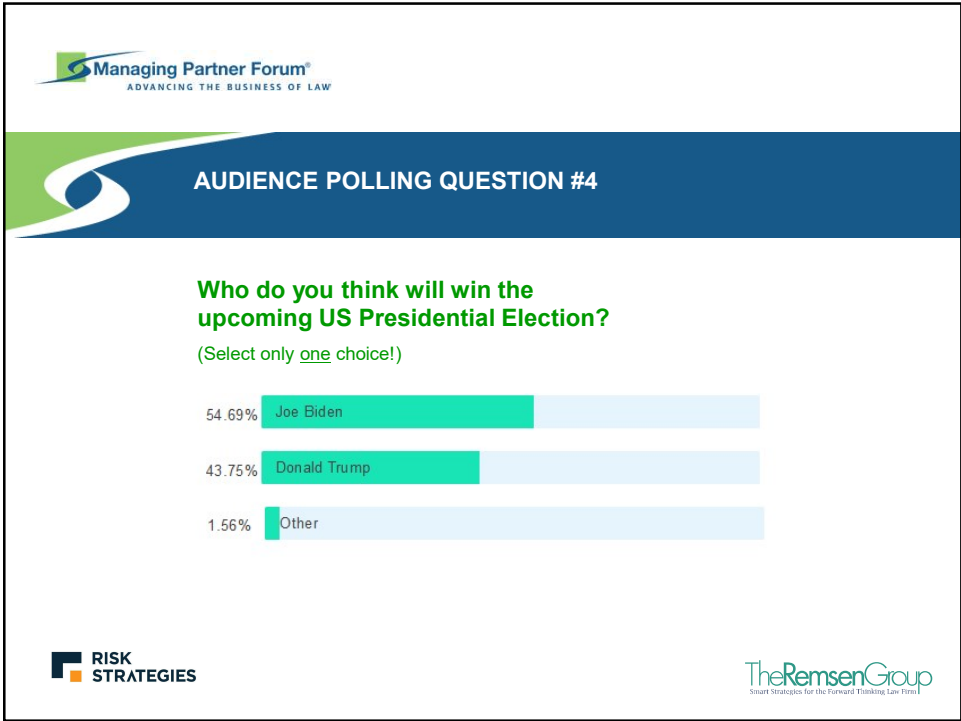


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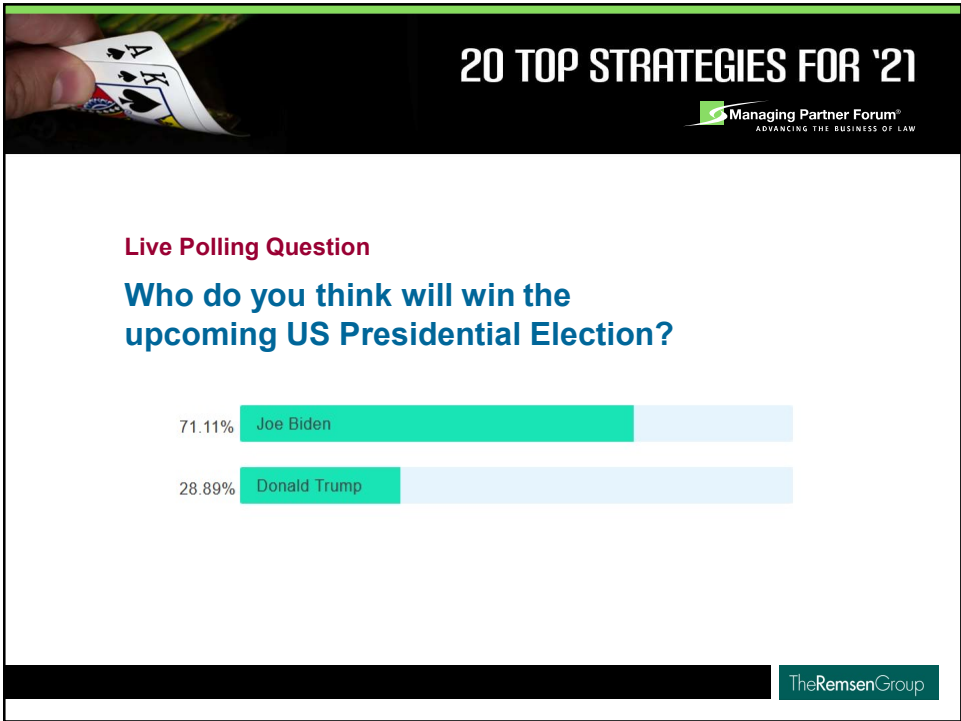
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MPF RESOURCES

- MPF Website – www.ManagingPartnerForum.org
- *The MPF Weekly*
- MPF Webinar Series
- The MPF 2021 Leadership Conference – May 5-6, 2021, in Atlanta
- MPF Listserv and Conference Calls
- Webinars for Your Firm or Organization



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CONTACT US

Uri Gutfreund
212.826.9744
uri.gutfreund@risk-strategies.com

Michael Moradzadeh, Esq.
415.683.5472
michael.morad@rimonlaw.com

John Remsen, Jr.
404.885.9100
jremsen@theremsen.com

Christopher T. Wilson, Esq.
770.434.6868
cwilson@taylorenglish.com



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The Law Firm of the Future



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DISRUPTING THE LAW FIRM MODEL

Rimon, P.C.

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Since its inception in 2008, Rimon, P.C. has repeatedly been recognized for its innovation and excellence by sources like the *ABA Journal* and *Financial Times*. Its founders began their careers at a large traditional law firm, at a time when computer technology was developing by leaps and bounds. They saw first-hand that the old law-firm model had serious weaknesses, and the new technology had enormous potential — for disruption, and for improvement.

The Traditional Law Firm and Its Problems

Six Hundred Years of Habit

The traditional law firm, with its seniority-based hierarchy, can trace its structure back to medieval guilds and their system of apprenticeship. A young associate, like an apprentice, may join a traditional firm, and by working hard enough and billing enough hours, he or she eventually rises to the next rank: partnership. Once made partner, after about ten years of practicing law, the attorney reaches the next rank — and is asked to develop business for the first time. Here the guild model shows its weakness: business development is not a refinement of the practice of law; it is a different skill set. Associates make partner due to long hours in the office, not necessarily a strong ability to attract clients.

If the partner successfully transitions to the role of generating business, after many years he or she reaches the highest rank of the guild, and is asked to take on an administrative role. Once again the attorney is thrust into a position that has nothing to do with previous successes or interests.

In this model, seniority dictates practice. The legal profession is among the last clinging to this legacy.

The Castle

The traditional law firm's offices, like the feudal lord's castle, tend to be large, well appointed, impressive — and expensive to maintain. A law firm often spends about one-third of its revenues to pay for real estate and technology. Spacious offices in desirable locations, hundreds of computers, printers and copiers, and the staff to keep it all operating add up to high overhead. These costs tend to be fixed, while work levels and income may fluctuate.

Colleagues or Competitors?

With all its shortcomings, the large law firm has one key benefit: the ability to work with colleagues and to learn from them. At a large firm, attorneys specializing in many areas of the law can collaborate to bring clients a wide range of expertise.

That, at any rate, is the theory. However, the “up or out” model of the hierarchical law firm introduces competition within the firm that may work against collaboration and do a disservice to attorneys and clients alike. Competition among partners and other lawyers within law firms is rarely spoken of. It is inconsistent with firm messaging about “seamless collaboration” of lawyers across practice groups and offices. But internal competition exists; it is not merely a plot device in legal dramas on television.

For some law firm lawyers — particularly those who are inclined to devote effort, time and resources into building new clientele and business — internal competition may manifest in a frustrating and sometimes painful “business conflict.” This is where a lawyer is prevented from opening an engagement not because it creates an ethical conflict, but because it would, or potentially could, cause a relationship problem or embarrassment for another (more senior, powerful, or favored) lawyer or practice group.

This is, fortunately, not a frequent problem. But for some great lawyers, and especially for the 15% or so who are most actively working to develop new business, the business conflict and other instances of internal competition can be a bitter pill.

Working for Someone Else

Many firms have long-term financial commitments to current and former partners, such as multi-year compensation packages, and retirement programs that are unfunded in whole or in part. Partners who do not directly benefit from these fixed commitments may feel as if the profits from their hard work are diverted to enrich others. Lateral hires may be stymied, as potential new star attorneys (the lifeblood of firms) choose not to subsidize people they do not know and to whom they have no loyalty. And such long-term fixed obligations may threaten a firm’s very existence during economic fluctuations.

The Annual Rollercoaster

Traditional law firms typically distribute all their profits at the end or beginning of the year. This practice has been spreading outside the legal profession since the 2008 recession, accelerated by the passage of the Trump tax plan in 2017: employers give bonuses instead of pay raises in the belief that variable, short-term rewards are less risky to the business than permanent increases in labor costs.

In theory, this approach promotes stability. In practice, law firms have been using this strategy for years with mixed results. Other industries should learn from the

dangers that law firms have experienced. The annual-payout model seems almost designed to create upheaval.

First, the end-of-year results are predictable: attorney stress level goes shooting up in November and December, having nothing to do with the work product. Everyone knows they need to hit their numbers, resulting in questionable billing practices and attorneys who are now on edge and bitter at their current employers.

Secondly, partners with plans to move on have a great incentive to stay quietly until after big payout. This means the firm may have no idea how many of their partners will leave immediately after they pay out, precisely when the firm has taken on large amounts of debt to cover end-of-year expenses. These firms plan budgets for the coming year without a true picture of the changes in cost and revenue from unpredictable firm departures. The resulting crisis in cash flow has led to the collapse of many firms, large and small.

For partners, especially junior ones, the end of the year handouts must seem like a pure magic show. At many firms, only a few partners in the firm's leadership truly understand how the money is divvied up, and questions as to how the finances work are not tolerated. The different types of compensation systems vary by firm, but for many partners, they bring the frustration of a mystery.

Since most compensation structures have at least some subjective elements to them, the actual bonus amount is often a surprise. As is usual human behavior, most people believe they should get more than they end up receiving. Those who receive more than they expected (which are few) initially feel great, but then just assume they deserved it. Meanwhile, those who got less than they expected (almost everyone) are very disappointed and feel cheated. Once they get the bonus or their yearly draw, these disappointed partners and associates start looking for greener pastures and a bigger payday elsewhere.

With the information hidden, rumors can start, pushing partners and associates to the door. Departures fuel more rumors, in a vicious cycle that may threaten a firm's existence.

The Billable Hour

Traditional law firms pressure their attorneys to meet a pre-set quota of "billable hours" — i.e., attorney time for which clients can be charged money. But this "tradition" is a relatively recent development.

During the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, lawyers generally billed clients on a variety of different bases: a fixed fee on a per-matter

basis; a monthly retainer for all legal work; and contingency fees or a percentage of the value of the transaction. In fact, bar associations throughout the country published legal fee schedules and ruled that it was unethical for lawyers to depart from them.

Hourly timekeeping was first introduced in Boston in 1904 as a management tool to promote lawyer efficiency. In the following decades, this system spread among law firms as an internal time-management practice.

Then, in 1975, the United States Supreme Court, in a series of opinions, found bar associations' mandated fee schedules to be a violation of antitrust laws. Such fee schedules became mere recommendations, and law firms struggled with finding different methods for billing clients. One solution was to use the system of hourly timekeeping, already widespread, as a new basis for billing. And so the billable hour was born.

To improve productivity, law firms began adopting policies requiring attorneys to bill a certain number of minimum hours each year. It seemed like a harmless enough step — until the number of those hours began to rise steadily beginning in the 1980s. Firms raised their hours-billed requirements to maximize the profits of partners. By 2001, large law firms typically asked associates to bill between 1,950 and 2,000 billable hours a year.

The billable hour's appeal as a management tool is also its greatest threat. Treating legal services as a commodity that can be measured in units of time diminishes the importance of both the quality of the work produced and the results achieved. For example, one could not reasonably argue that an hour spent quietly preparing a routine corporate document has the same value as an hour spent closing a complex transaction involving many disparate players. Few other industries would thrive if they measured productivity by the time their workers spent without regard to what those workers created. The billable-hour standard invites inefficiency, to say the least.

The Client Rebellion

In recent years, and especially following the 2008 recession, clients — particularly those of significant economic clout — have been looking critically at traditional attorney-client relations. Clearly, the hourly billing process rewards inefficiency and places the risk of the legal engagement on the client, not the law firm. Clients are demanding radical change — hence the advent of the value-billing alternative fee arrangement (“AFA”).

In late March 2010, Eversheds LLP, a London “Magic Circle” firm, released the results of a survey it had undertaken of corporate counsel and leaders of major

law firms. The *ABA Journal* summarized Eversheds' report in a few critically instructive paragraphs:

"The legal landscape has changed permanently and more quickly than anyone imagined," the report says. In the new, post-recession legal market, general counsel has more status and influence in their corporations, fee levels will decline or stay the same, and legal work will become more efficient as tasks are outsourced and technology is used.

In this changed world, law firm structures may be vulnerable. Forty-six percent of managing partners said a reduction and change in premium legal work available would change law firms' shape and size. The larger firms reported long-term cuts in headcount and leverage, and possible changes to the "up and out" pyramid structure of law firms. Only 30 percent of the partners said they were wedded to the traditional partnership model.

In this new legal world, hourly fees are giving way to value billing that is based on the value of work to the client rather than lawyer hours expended, the report found. Two years ago, only 22 percent of in-house clients and 48 percent of partners surveyed saw value billing as a trend for the future. Now, 86 percent of clients and 88 percent of partners say they often or sometimes use value billing. Among the partners surveyed from the United Kingdom, 79 percent said the hourly rate was almost dead.

Among the most prominent advocates of the AFA in recent years has been Jeffrey W. Carr, Jr. While serving as General Counsel to FMC Technologies, he assumed a leadership role on behalf of private industry, arguing that corporate clients should dictate to outside law firms the terms of any engagement and that virtually every engagement demands "performance-based pay." During his tenure as corporate counsel, FMC Technologies saw its sales rise but its legal costs go down in step with its increasing use of AFAs.

In a 2010 interview with *Law360*, Mr. Carr gave advice to outside law firms that is direct, succinct and beyond misinterpretation:

Change and do it now. Learn to focus on delivery of value by reducing your costs to remain profitable as opposed to leveraging the pyramid and focusing only on top line revenue growth. To quote a former U.S. Army chief of Staff, "If you dislike change, you're going to dislike irrelevance even more."

Increasingly, clients see AFAs as a tool to ensure efficient delivery of quality legal services at predictable rates, consistent with the current market and with the law firms themselves assuming a degree of the risk in such engagements. And with the demand for legal services significantly lower than the existing supply, clients are in a position to call the shots.

The Digital Revolution

Two hundred years ago, the Industrial Revolution brought down the old guild system by automating skill through technology. The resulting economic changes allowed for more efficient business models and the ability to specialize: those who prefer to administer focus on administration, those who enjoy sales and business development make that their careers, and so forth.

Now we are in the midst of a new revolution driven by the power of digital technology and the Internet. Already we are experiencing a new way of working that allows for even more specialization and freedom. Attorneys no longer need to be tethered to their desk. Cloud computing allows attorneys to work from anywhere, with instant communication and a vast amount of information at their fingertips.

But the Digital Revolution is having as profound an effect on business models as the Industrial Revolution did in the past. Automation has a long history of replacing blue-collar workers; now, increasingly sophisticated automation technologies have begun their march through the white-collar workplace. The McKinsey Global Institute, in its November 2017 report examining the effects of automation on the workplace, predicts that one-third of American workers may be out of a career by 2030. Identifying a number of likely “winners” and “losers” in the new global economy, McKinsey sees lawyers, accountants and other professionals as relatively safe from automation. For lawyers, being cited as a future survivor of the automation earthquake may seem reassuring. But close followers of the legal industry realize that survival requires change.

In law firms, the broad and disruptive impact of computer technology has already begun, moving upward from support staff toward senior partners. The legal industry has adopted new labor-saving technologies that reduce time and manpower requirements in both legal and administrative work. Law firms have pared down their support staff and aggressively looked to move the back office to cheaper locales — whether that is West Virginia or India. In doing so, law firms are following their clients. Companies have embraced the technologies that allow them to cut staff and outsource functions. Having made their own operations “lean and mean,” businesses have begun to expect the same from their

professional service providers. This new attitude has resulted in major upheaval in the legal landscape.

Clients are pressuring firms to move away from higher-paid associates for the more basic work, such as documents reviews and productions, that has been a critical part of associate training (and a money-maker for firms). Instead, firms frequently give such assignments to lower-paid contract attorneys — who, unlike associates, don't get paid when there is no work to be done. And technology already exists that is capable of inexpensively automating legal tasks such as research, document drafting and review, due diligence, and discovery. The McKinsey report notes this phenomenon, with a concern that high-wage “safe” occupations may face downward pressure on wages due to automation.

Traditional law firms have built themselves on leverage and hierarchy depending on billable hours by more junior associates and staff. Now they are facing a new economy that includes competition from robots and global outsourcing. Unless they fundamentally change their revenue and employment models, more efficient automation can destroy these law firms.

The future, in the legal industry, belongs to decentralized and nimble law firms which are intentionally built to avoid the old model of leveraging young associates and billing by the hour. The attorneys who founded Rimon, P.C. recognized the immense potential, including the functional ramifications, of digital technology, and seized the opportunity for innovation. Our structure allows for more tailored billing, giving us an incentive to invest in more efficient, and higher-quality, processes for legal output. We were quick to embrace software robots and automation across the firm. Adaptability is built into our DNA.

The Rimon Way

Rimon, P.C. went virtual in March 2008. We have created a new model of a law firm that combines the key strength of the traditional firm with the new flexibility of the Digital Age. Our model includes the elements that more and more clients — and attorneys — are seeking.

The World Is Our Office

Our cloud-based technology means that our attorneys can work from anywhere in the world, with very little equipment — a smart phone can be enough. Email, cellphones and video conferencing allow our clients to communicate directly with our attorneys at any time. Our e-rooms allow attorneys to work together in real time with clients and colleagues. Even support staff can often work remotely,

which allows us to attract talented and experienced people who are looking for greater flexibility in their working life.

Community and Collaboration

We realized early on that even in the Digital Age, attorneys are still human. Community and informal interaction are key to a positive work environment, to innovation, and to preservation of the one great strength of a law firm — the ability to work with your colleagues and to learn from them.

For this reason, we decided to have small-scale brick-and-mortar offices, placed in strategic areas close to clusters of our attorneys and clients. They serve as bases for our attorneys to meet clients, to meet with each other, and to just hang out.

Rimon's partners meet twice a month at our corporate office in San Francisco (in person, by video, or by teleconference) to discuss deals we are working on, and to brainstorm on ways to better serve our clients. These sessions allow us to bring the expertise of the cross-section of practice areas to every deal, giving our attorneys a more holistic approach to their representations. It also allows our attorneys to know each other personally. This personal interaction is key to a collegial work place where attorneys know they can trust the work of their colleagues. This not only makes our attorneys happier people, it exponentially increases collaboration between attorneys.

Stability and Savings

Our careful mix of the virtual and the human comes at a very low cost. With a light overhead, the firm is more stable, so attorneys as well as clients benefit from the savings.

No Billable-Hour Quotas

Rimon has completely abandoned the billable-hour requirement. As a result, attorneys no longer have an incentive to be inefficient — for example, to do routine work that could be done less expensively by paralegals. Clients see their costs go down, while attorneys are free to focus on what they love (such as business development or counseling), and to keep their work and life in better balance.

Alternative Fee Arrangements

With no pressure to bill a certain number of hours, Rimon attorneys have the billing flexibility that clients want. We offer a variety of alternative fee arrangements, including fixed fees, a reduced hourly fee against which a

premium fee is paid upon the successful conclusion of an engagement, contingency fee arrangements, capped fees and, yes, hourly fees where our clients feel it appropriate. We avoid any surprises by enabling our clients to log in at any time on our extranet and see exactly what is happening with their matters. We monitor our billing budgets closely and are happy to remit bi-weekly billing summaries.

We communicate with our clients to understand their situation and carefully craft the scope of our work. We also try to reach a mutual understanding of tasks that may be outside the scope of a particular engagement, and how such out-of-scope work might be priced if our client calls upon us to handle it. To arrive at a fair and reasonable price for our services, we also seek to understand how our clients assess the value of the finished product we are to deliver.

We strive to fully comprehend our client's expectations for our performance — and take every opportunity to exceed those expectations.

A Simple Formula for Attorney Compensation

In response to the problems with the traditional annual-bonus model, we created a new compensation system for Rimon Law. Our attorneys get regular payouts throughout the year — no big lump bonuses or draws that would force us to borrow money or empty our coffers. The compensation model is also fully objective, based on two factors:

- *Work Product.* The traditional law firm business model pays attorneys based on a black box calculation, factors of which typically include seniority, expectations, and perceived benefit to the firm. The calculation is often speculative, arbitrary, and perceived to be “unfair.” Rimon’s solution to this problem is to compensate attorneys based on work they have done — direct value to clients. If they work more, and the clients are happy with the work, they get paid more. As simple as that. This way attorneys know exactly what they are getting and they are motivated by clients’ needs and satisfaction.
- *New Business.* Under the traditional law firm business model, attorneys are recognized and compensated for bringing business to the firm — but the compensation is not often clearly tied to the value. Attorneys who produce a lot of business rarely keep a majority of what they bring in, while attorneys bringing in less business and doing less work often end up making more money. This unpredictability creates a disincentive to bring in business. Rimon’s solution to this problem is to compensate attorneys directly for bringing in clients. Attorneys are not pressured to develop business, but they know that they will receive a large portion of business

they develop. This brings our firm in line with modern companies who recognize the value of business development.

Rimon attorneys know exactly what they will get paid, and actually get paid much more than at traditional firms. This has led to an incredibly high retention rate with growth of 30-40% year over year for the last ten years. From time to time, an attorney leaves Rimon, but their departure does not have a huge financial impact — and the yearly mass exodus is unknown.

No Hierarchy

As numerous psychological studies have found, hierarchy in itself causes high levels of stress and poor health consequences. Rimon decided to eliminate the hierarchy. Our goal is to make the firm serve the attorneys, so that the attorneys can focus on serving the clients. The firm works hard to give the attorneys all the tools they need to serve their clients. This means helping attorneys collaborate with each other and with clients, giving them administrative and technical support, and helping them with business development and marketing services.

Up ... or Not

Along with the pyramidal business model, Rimon has rejected the narrow “up or out” path that attorneys at traditional law firms must follow. Rimon attorneys make their own paths. Those who live to work, and those who seek a different work-life balance, can both find a place at Rimon. This flexibility allows us to attract talent at all stages of life and career.

Happier attorneys and better served clients:
that is the Rimon way.

How 'Hybrid Remote' Works for Midsize Taylor English

"Every other industry has employees who work remotely, why should law firms be any different?" partner Christopher Wilson says.

By Lizzy McLellan

Taylor English Duma, a firm of roughly 170 lawyers based in Atlanta, bills itself as "a new breed of law firm" in part because of its hybrid remote model, which is "designed to share certain characteristics found in a traditional firm with certain characteristics of a virtual firm."

**The responses here were provided by Christopher Wilson, a partner at the firm focusing on corporate and finance legal issues.*

What is Taylor English's hybrid remote model?

Taylor English's hybrid remote attorney model is designed to be a middle-ground between a traditional law firm and a virtual law firm that allows attorneys the opportunity to assist clients with their legal issues inside a better business model. It was designed to share certain characteristics found in a traditional firm



Christopher Wilson of Taylor English Duma in Atlanta.

with certain characteristics of a virtual firm.

For example, our remote attorneys are provided with many of the tools they would find in a traditional firm in order to help their clients (internal video phone network, free access to Lexis Advance, Practical Law, PLI and other similar support systems, and internal IT, marketing,

and accounting departments), yet they are compensated based on a formula commonly found in virtual law firms that returns up to 80% of the revenue they generate back to them.

Attorneys have the freedom and flexibility found in virtual law firms combined with the efficiency and business acumen of a traditional

firm, so they can focus on helping their clients.

We provide the back-office structure and the team-oriented atmosphere you find with traditional firms and combine it with the entrepreneurial attitude and compensation formula found in virtual firms, and deliver a product that we believe best fits the needs of many attorneys.

What are some of the different ways lawyers have benefited from it?

A lot of our remote attorneys love the flexibility of the program as it allows them to decide where and when they want to work. Many of them work from a home office and have gained up to three hours in time savings from no longer having to commute to an office. This allows them more time to work for their clients, more time to do business development, and more time to spend with their friends and family.

Another benefit of our program is that we allow our attorneys to set their own billing rates. When an attorney at a traditional firm where their rate is set by the firm can join us and instantly drop his or her billing rate because the attorney now controls their rate, clients are thrilled and

those attorneys typically grow and expand their relationships with those clients instead of being priced out of the clients' budget.

A third benefit of our program is that it allows the attorney to make up to 80% of his or her book of business. We have attorneys who join us and double their income from one year to the next.

When and why did the firm choose to implement this model? What is the value?

Taylor English developed the program in 2017 and began hiring attorneys into the program in 2018. We now have attorneys in California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Washington, D.C., By expanding in these markets through attorneys working remotely instead of the traditional way of opening an office and incurring a lot of fixed expenses, it allows Taylor English to keep our costs down and return a majority of the revenue to the attorneys actually building the relationships and performing the legal work for clients.

When traditional firms open an office in a new location, they incur a lot of fixed expenses (leasing an office, filling the office with furniture

and equipment) and then hope to generate the revenue to cover those expenses. Sometimes that works and sometimes it does not.

In today's COVID-19 world, having a lot of fixed expenses tied up in office space that no one can use has been a huge issue for many traditional law firms. That is one of the reasons why so many Am Law 200 firms are reducing compensation and taking other cost reduction measures: their expenses are simply too high relative to their revenue, and they cannot get out of their long-term office leases. Because we decided to grow differently than traditional firms, this is not a problem Taylor English is facing.

Every other industry has employees who work remotely, why should law firms be any different? It is time for the legal industry to evolve its business model from the antiquated traditional firms of 50 years ago and embrace what every other industry has recognized: working remotely can be incredibly successful for both attorneys and their clients.

Lizzy McLellan writes about the business of law at firms of all sizes. Contact her at lmclellan@alm.com. On Twitter: [@LizzyMcLell](https://twitter.com/LizzyMcLell)

Virtual Is the New Law Firm Reality

A roundtable of five leaders managing virtual law firms.

Marcia Watson Wasserman

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Enhanced technology, high office rent, traffic and long commute times, work/life blend and a desire to better serve clients have resulted in the creation of a new way to practice law: the virtual law firm. For some, this means a cloud-based, distributed law firm with 21 available, on-demand, fixed office locations throughout the U.S. For others it means no brick-and-mortar locations at all. At the request of the *Law Practice* editorial board, I asked five law firm leaders to share their experiences managing and, in some instances, starting virtual law firms. They are Cathryn Chinn, CEO of VLP Law Group LLP (VLP) in San Francisco; Cynthia Flynn, managing partner of Hackler Flynn & Associates (HF) in Monterey Park, California; Grant Walsh, co-founder and co-managing partner of Culhane Meadows PLLC (CM) in Dallas; Brooke Moore, founder and president of MyVirtual.Lawyer (MVL) in Little Rock, Arkansas; and Joel Ferdinand, general counsel and managing partner of litigation of FisherBroyles, LLP (FB) in Atlanta.

Law Practice (LP): Please tell us a little bit about your firm, that is, the number of attorneys, paralegals and staff; the locations; the practice areas.

Chinn: VLP currently has 60 attorneys, nine paralegals and 11 staff. Our attorneys cover 18 practice areas in eight industries. Our attorneys and staff are located around the country, currently in 15 different states.

Flynn: HF has seven attorneys, two paralegals and two support staff. We have offices in Monterey Park and Irvine, California, but our lawyers work remotely from California and four other states. Our practice area is employment defense—protecting and defending business owners.

Walsh: CM is the largest national, full-service, women-owned law firm in the country, having grown in six years from four co-founders to almost 70 partner-level attorneys—and no associates—in nine locations. As one of the largest cloud-based firms in the country, we do not employ any salaried paralegals and instead engage legal support resources under a variable cost approach to cut overhead and save money for our clients. We have a full back-office administrative team (also working remotely from their home offices) that handles our day-to-day operational needs, conflict checks, billing, invoicing, setting up new client files, etc.

Moore: My official title is founder, but my internal title is madam president. (We give ourselves fun names.) I primarily take on the role of innovation, marketing, growth and outreach. I have a partner who joined the firm last year as chief operations officer and chaos coordinator. We have three contract attorneys in Arkansas. We also license our MVL brand and have attorney licensees in multiple jurisdictions throughout the country. Because we rely on technology, automation and outsourcing, internal support staff is not necessary. Our firm is 100 percent virtual and handles family, estate and business law matters on a flat-fee, limited scope or subscription basis.

Ferdinand: FB has 21 fixed office locations available for use (so that clients are not charged exorbitant rates for overhead that not all partners need) and a sophisticated and secure infrastructure so that our partners may work from the locations they desire to be more efficient while passing cost savings on to our clients. FB is a full-service law firm composed of approximately 235 partners—we are a partner-only law firm so that our clients are not billed for associates to learn on the job—providing national and international services to our clients. Throughout the firm we have an additional 107 staff members, ranging from paralegals, assistants, accounting representatives, conflicts

representatives and the like.

LP: How does your firm handle legal and administrative workflow—for example, people, systems, procedures and collaboration software?

Flynn: Each case is assigned to one attorney. We use Lexicata and Clio. We have a firm-wide calendar meeting once a week in which we go over exciting things happening personally and professionally, the calendar and any questions or outstanding issues with clients or cases. All mail that comes in is scanned and sent to the paralegals for review and distribution. All mail that goes out, goes out by one of them.

Walsh: CM is unique among law firms in that it has created a working environment that encourages deep collaboration among attorneys across all geographies and practice disciplines to best serve clients' needs. We implement technology that fosters and sustains BigLaw-style collaborative relationships among partners at a much lower cost. Data security is also a top priority. Intermedia provides hosting services for email. The firm uses Worldox for central document management, the SecuriSync file-sharing portal for secure collaboration on documents with clients and partners, and Skype for Business for videocalls between partners and to share screens while collaborating on documents. The firm also has an internal, secure instant-messaging system for immediate communications or to exchange notes with remote partners during a multiperson conference call.

Moore: We heavily rely on technology to operate and expand our practice. Potential clients will sign up for a 30-minute phone consultation by either calling our virtual reception service (TeleDirect) or signing up on our calendar (Acuity Scheduling) directly from our website. After the consultation, if the person becomes a client, we set him or her up in our law practice management client portal (PracticePanther), and from there we communicate, share documents (Box) and receive payments (LawPay) through the client portal for the duration of our retained service. We also use ArmorText, an encrypted messaging and management tool, to

communicate, collaborate and share resources internally with our team. Videoconferencing is our preferred choice for video meetings and trainings.

LP: What type of office space does your firm use? Where are “home field” depositions or closings, client and firm meetings held?

Chinn: We have no brick-and-mortar office. Each attorney is responsible for his or her own work environment. Some work from home, some rent their own office space. Administrative staff works from home. Individual attorneys meet with their own clients as needed, often at the client’s office or for a meal or coffee. We have regular biweekly firm teleconference calls via videoconference. Practice groups, staff and various committees have monthly or biweekly conference calls as well. Teleconferencing is generally the way our firm keeps in touch.

Flynn: Our Los Angeles office rents space from a manufacturing company; we have office space and use of the conference room. Our Irvine office is an executive suite. Most meetings are held in our Los Angeles office, but we find that, in representing busy business owners, we can do just about everything via email, phone calls and videoconference calls. Depositions are either taken in our office or at the court reporter’s location.

Moore: Our firm is 100 percent virtual. We do not have any brick-and-mortar locations. We all work remotely from home offices, coffee shops, our couches and, occasionally, a kid’s soccer game. Our firm is entirely transactional, even for litigation-based practice areas. Our limited scope representation services delegate administrative tasks to the client while we handle the transactional legal components of their case, so in-person interactions are not necessary. We meet with clients initially via phone or videoconferencing. Once a client is set up in our client portal, the client has direct access to its attorney through the messaging feature. All further communication and correspondence happen there. We do have a UPS box mailing address that provides a physical street address for business mailings or listings and to appease Google’s algorithms.

LP: How does your firm address supervising, motivating, developing and retaining attorneys and staff? Is your firm's virtual practice an asset or liability for retention, and why?

Flynn: I only hire the best candidates, all of whom have more experience than me. Each attorney I currently work with has over 10 years of legal experience and therefore requires little to no oversight. Expectations are clearly set prior to hiring, which is basically the number of hours each attorney is required to bill per week. The fact that all the attorneys here have a home office and can work essentially whatever hours they'd like seems to attract and retain high-quality talent. This flexibility allows our attorneys to go to their child's soccer game, be involved in their child's PTA and attend parent-teacher meetings on their own terms without having to worry about being judged for not being in the office. Also, once a year we do a company-wide get-together where we bring everyone together for a few days for fun stuff—we've done yoga/meditation, photo shoots, hiking, helicopter rides, boat rides and Broadway shows in New York—all sorts of fun events.

Walsh: CM's partners come to us highly motivated. They actively seek out CM's cloud-based approach and transparent, merit-based compensation system where our low overhead structure lets them take home about twice as much compared to a traditional firm. They come to CM from conventional BigLaw firms and even other virtual law firms because they want a better, more transparent and more attorney-client-friendly way to practice law! CM partners stay because they genuinely like each other—yes, each office organizes regular social events—and because CM is uniquely partner-focused. We are intentional during recruiting because we're determined to keep this cool culture and foster this tight-knit, collaborative environment among a geographically dispersed and diverse partnership. Every month CM hosts an all-firm conference call as well as in-person local gatherings for our partners in each market. To build esprit de corps, office members frequently get together for a community service activity or recruiting happy hours or other social events. In addition, the firm holds an annual four-day partnership retreat for meetings and social interaction

between the attorneys.

Ferdinand: FB's cloud-based, distributed model is an absolute asset to retention. Because FB hires only partners and provides transparent formula-based compensation (with four specific payment metrics for obtaining a client, working on a client matter for your own client, working on a client matter for another partner's client and recruiting), our partners are incentivized to work together, have the highest-quality work product and to be efficient for the benefit of the client. Because we are a partner-only law firm, supervision is a misnomer. Our partners work efficiently together such that we can monitor work product through a team approach. Our model allows lower billing rates by drastically reducing overhead and passing on cost savings directly to our clients. This all results in a better work product, at a better rate for our clients, with partners that are actually happy.

LP: How does your firm create and influence culture?

Chinn: VLP believes that creating a strong culture is important to the overall well-being of the firm. We have a Virtual Culture Committee (VCC) that is tasked with creating and maintaining the culture of our firm, something that can be challenging in a virtual environment. The VCC regularly has contests and drawings. Its members ask people to send in family photos for various events during the year, such as summer vacations, back to school and Halloween. There are sports challenges (Super Bowl, March Madness, fantasy football and baseball) and Oscar prediction contests. During the holidays the VCC hosts a virtual auction for charity, and employees donate and bid on items. VLP lawyers and staff regularly get together informally for lunches or coffee, and the firm also organizes regional get-togethers during the year, such as barbecues, a concert in the park or serving together at a local food bank. The firm typically holds a spring meeting and a fall retreat for all VLP personnel during which people have the opportunity to get together in person for professional sessions and social activities.

Moore: All our attorneys take accountability for their role in building the

MVL brand. Before new attorneys or licensees join us, we make sure they understand our law firm model, embrace the same passion for our services and have the entrepreneurial work ethic it takes to succeed. We encourage feedback, communication and collaboration within our community. We are responsive and make sure our attorneys know they are appreciated. We also have realistic expectations for, and empathy towards, our team. We are real and transparent, and I think our attorneys appreciate that. We also market our firm to attorneys who could benefit from our model to start or continue to meaningfully practice law. Specifically, we target military spouse attorneys, mom attorneys and retiring attorneys. Our model is built to fit their unique lifestyle because, as a military spouse and mom myself, I built this firm based on my challenges with traditional options in the legal profession. It also helps that our attorneys retain control over their practices, instantly join a collaborative community and, most importantly, they can work in their pajamas.

Ferdinand: The first measure of a firm's continuing culture is in the recruits it hires. Our executive committee, which acts as the firm's hiring committee, carefully examines recruits. We find that most firms focus on the portable book of a recruit. While that is certainly a factor in our recruiting process, we focus more on the recruit herself or himself. Frankly, due to the formula-based compensation structure at FB, we tend to hire lawyers who not only understand the model but also are frustrated with the typical inefficiencies and the red tape of traditional, large law firms. These recruits want to practice on a high level, work with people they both trust and like, and desire transparency. FB's model is uniquely situated to provide the same, which continues its culture.

LP: How does having a virtual firm help you with marketing to prospective clients and retaining and cross-selling to existing ones?

Chinn: In the 21st century most legal services are provided by telephone and

email. Many clients never personally meet the lawyers with whom they are working. In that regard VLP is no different from any other law firm, and that VLP is a virtual firm is immaterial to most clients. However, VLP's lower overhead (because we do not have brick-and-mortar offices) allows our attorneys to offer clients more flexibility in how services are provided, whether that be flexible pricing, on-site hours or dynamic teams. In addition, VLP does not hire junior attorneys or paralegals. Accordingly, clients understand that they are paying for legal services from experienced lawyers, not for fancy offices or training junior personnel. The fact that we have attorneys who specialize in many different practice areas allows VLP to offer clients a broad range of transactional and intellectual property legal services.

Walsh: Business in general is increasingly virtual. Our clients, even the Fortune 100, rely on a growing, geographically dispersed, virtual workforce themselves. They like that we are lean, nimble and laser-focused on delivering highly sophisticated legal counsel on their most complicated matters in the U.S. and around the globe. CM serves nearly two dozen *Fortune*-ranked corporate clients who trust us with their complex legal work because they know our partner-only roster is comprised of experienced BigLaw talent—delivering client-centric results at a fraction of conventional BigLaw fees. Our members guide clients through \$100 million+ deals, work collaboratively and form client service teams. New CM clients are pleasantly surprised that when their attorney joins CM and “moves to the cloud,” nothing changes in their attorney-client relationship except the value proposition. The client no longer sees fancy artwork on the walls because the firm has no walls and no unnecessary overhead. When clients call to talk to their lawyer, their attorney answers the phone rather than layers of staff. And the attorneys working on their matter have an average of more than 20 years of experience, not a third-year associate's.

Ferdinand: Our cloud-based, distributed model has helped FB drastically reduce traditional overhead that is simply not needed by most of our partners. Fixed office space, assistants for every lawyer, paralegals for every lawyer and the like are not necessary for all lawyers because of the proper

utilization of software and technology. Most law firms are antagonistic to change, and particularly hostile toward technology. This is remarkable, however, where the clients we all represent use technology for efficiency. Deleveraging overhead, paying your attorneys more for them to utilize some of that money to personally decide what resources they need for their respective practices, allowing billable rate control and leveraging technology results in a sound model that lends itself well for marketing, retention and cross-selling. As to marketing, FB is the oldest and largest cloud-based law firm in the world. From our clients' perspective, this simply means that we are a partner-only law firm, will not bill to learn on the job, will perform work at a high level and our invoices are typically far less for the same work we performed at our previous large law firms.

LP: Any parting words of wisdom for lawyers who are contemplating setting up their own virtual law firms?

Chinn: You have to work at it to get it right. It's not as easy as it looks. We've been at it for more than 10 years, and we're still improving. And a good IT support staff is essential. But if you take the leap, and eliminate or reduce your commute and overhead, practicing law in a virtual firm can be extremely rewarding—professionally and personally.

Flynn: I wholeheartedly recommend it. I work harder than I ever have before, but most of my work is not done in the office. I'm constantly out and about in client meetings, networking events and speaking engagements. I feel that if I had all our attorneys and staff come into the office every day, resentments might start to build up because I'm not physically there—even though I'm working more hours than I ever had before—so I think having a virtual firm is a positive benefit. Also, when you have employees working from home, make sure they are well-vetted and that you can trust them. Set expectations early and have key performance indicators for everyone.

Walsh: Cloud-based law firms *are* real law firms. Despite the myth of simplicity in launching a virtual or cloud-based law firm, the learning curve is