

330-JUN N.J. Law. 9

New Jersey Lawyer, the Magazine

June, 2021

In This Issue: Trial Advocacy and Preparedness

Department

Practice Tips

What I Wish I Knew

[Ayesha Hamilton](#)

Hamilton Law Firm PC

Copyright © 2021 by New Jersey State Bar Association; Ayesha Hamilton

HOW NETWORKING IS A GAME-CHANGER

What's the one thing that you are *not* taught in law school? The importance of networking. In fact, as young lawyers, you dive into your first job, swamped by the grunt work that no one else wants to do, barely keeping your head above water as you draft discovery and pleadings surrounded by mounds of paper. Wait, that was in 1998 in my first job, and while everything is now housed in a neat little laptop or iPad, you get the idea.

***10** I realize now that business development and bar association involvement is essential to any attorney's success, whether in a firm or in your own practice. The bottom line is that no one will share a piece of the pie with you if you aren't helping make the pie larger.

As a woman of color and an immigrant and a new lawyer, I also realize that there were certain networking techniques, events, associations etc. that simply weren't known to me. I didn't realize that networking at bar association events put me in close proximity to judges and other lawyers which might lead to my next position.

Here is what I have learned along the way:

1. Bar association involvement is essential to your success. The more committed your involvement, the better. This allows attorneys across your county or the state to get to know you on a personal level, which invariably leads to referrals.
2. If you claim that your firm is committed to diversity and inclusion initiatives, then that commitment should stretch to action items like taking a young associate to networking events, i.e. showing them how it is done.
3. The only way to get good at networking is to practice. I used to sign-up for lots of business networking events. I would walk into the room, look at all of the people I didn't know and walk back out to my car. Once I realized that everyone there was there to meet each other and that absolutely no one was ever mean to me, I felt more comfortable about joining into a conversation. Before you know it, you are walking into a room where you know others and networking is much easier.

4. Take charge of developing a mentoring relationship. Take the initiative to identify a good mentor for you, buy them lunch and pick their brains. Have more than one mentor to add diversity of perspective.

These are all lessons I learned the hard way and hope you can benefit from my experience.

330-JUN NJLAW 9

End of Document

© 2021 Thomson Reuters. No claim to original U.S. Government Works.