

Dillon and Naeger Share Ways Associates Can Make Themselves Indispensable in Law360 Article

In the News

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Stinson LLP's attorneys [Ashley Dillon](#) and [Erin Naeger](#) authored a Law360 Expert Analysis article, "Law School's Missed Lessons: Be An Indispensable Associate," where they discussed the skills that are essential to becoming a successful attorney after law school. The authors, who lead the firm's Associate Competencies Engagement (ACE) Program, emphasize the importance of developing practical skills and professional behaviors that are often not taught in law school but are critical for long-term success in legal practice.

Among Dillon and Naeger's recommendations for associates are continually delivering top-quality service in both internal and client-facing opportunities, demonstrating reliability, taking ownership of the situation at hand, admitting and promptly correcting mistakes, seeking feedback, and drafting internal correspondence to be client-ready, so that assigning attorneys spend minimal time editing.

"Transitioning from a summer associate to a successful full-time associate is a process that requires intentionality, and the ability to adapt and take a proactive approach, much of which is never addressed in law school," Dillon and Naeger write. "With the right mindset and dedication, your summer associate experience can serve as a solid foundation for a thriving legal career."

Dillon and Naeger also explain how the firm's ACE Program works with associates to ensure they are getting the work opportunities necessary to grow their skills within their practice area. This includes connecting associates with partners who provide opportunities an associate may not even know are available. In addition, they also advise how the firm's pro bono program offers associates opportunities to gain different experiences, ones they might not otherwise acquire from their billable matters. They encourage associates to capitalize on the resources available at the firm to hone and advance their skills.

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Prior to leading the ACE Program for the firm's litigation associates, Dillon's practice focused on resolving employment disputes at both the state and federal levels, as well as before administrative agencies.

Naeger, who leads the ACE Program for the firm's transactional associates, previously focused on employment-related compliance and litigation matters, including human resources best practices, wage and hour matters, disability accommodations, and preventing discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

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