MANAGING PARTNER DEPARTURES: A 5-STEP COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

Partner departures are a natural part of a law firm's evolution, but how you handle the messaging can significantly impact your firm's reputation, client relationships, and internal morale. A well-executed communications strategy ensures stability, minimizes disruption, and reinforces confidence in the firm's leadership.

*Here are **5** essential steps to help law firm leaders navigate partner departures with clarity, confidence, and professionalism.*

1. ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEPARTURE WITH GRATITUDE

- Highlight the departing member's contributions and impact.
- Use a positive, appreciative tone.
- **Example:** *"We want to take a moment to recognize [Name] for their contributions to [specific projects/initiatives]. Their dedication has made a lasting impact, and we are grateful for their time with us."*

2. BE TRANSPARENT (BUT PROFESSIONAL)

- If possible, share why they are leaving, but avoid unnecessary details.
- Reinforce that the organization remains strong.
- **Example:** "*[Name] has decided to pursue a new opportunity, and while we are sad to see them go, we support their decision and wish them all the best.*"

3. REASSURE YOUR TEAM

- Address concerns about continuity, workload, and job stability.
- Outline any transition plans.
- **Example:** *"We understand that change can be challenging, but we have a plan in place to ensure a smooth transition."*

4. REMAIN POSITIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING

- Highlight the departing member's contributions and impact.
- Use a positive, appreciative tone.
- **Example:** *"We want to take a moment to recognize [Name] for their contributions to [specific projects/initiatives]. Their dedication has made a lasting impact, and we are grateful for their time with us."*

5. PERSONALIZE FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

- Internal Team: More detailed, including transition plans.
- **Clients/External Partners:** Brief and reassuring, focusing on continuity.
- **External Example:** *"We want to share that [Name] is moving on from our firm. Your client team remains ready to support your needs and can be reached at any time at [email or phone]."*

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