





nothing to confront these growing challenges, remaining complacent in their efforts to make a change.

Failing to address this growing desire can mean maxed-out workers, potential for higher turnover and unmet expectations. It's time for firms that are struggling to create this kind of culture to take control and offer the balance sorely needed in the legal industry.

## **A SYMPTOM OF IMBALANCE**

Just like a car stops working when it runs out of fuel, people can only give so much before they burn out.

The high stress and grueling hours that come

biggest difference among lawyers of different generations. One lawyer respondent from the State of Small Law Report notes, “there is a massive disconnect between the younger generation and firm partners.”

What matters most to Millennial lawyers is an ability to work faster and smarter, looking at technology to help them work more efficiently. They are the first generation to grow up with access to a wealth of information at their fingertips, meaning they aren’t just comfortable with technology – they expect it. Firms that acknowledge and meet these needs by providing the latest software, accessible communication tools and automated processes are the ones successfully capturing the attention of these lawyers.

Unfortunately, this is causing the generational gap to widen even more, with 66 percent of lawyers reporting that technology skills and knowledge is a challenge between generations. A firm that is not working to bridge this gap and deliver on these expectations only means losing its ability to appeal to this new pool of talent.

## MAKING BALANCE A REALITY

Simply put, work/life balance is no longer a wish-list item. For firms to remain a viable choice for top lawyers, balance must be a tool in their arsenal of resources to improve the well-being of employees and the office as a whole.

Aside from the individual benefits, making it a priority can also save money in the long run. According to the Harvard Business Review, the

psychological and physical problems of burned-out workers in the U.S. costs organizations an estimated \$125 billion to \$190 billion a year. A lawyer from the State of Small Law Report explains, “The hiring of each new lawyer is a five-year process, and each mistake – including lawyers who leave for personal reasons unrelated to their ability – has a dramatic impact on the firm.”

While work will always need to be done and deadlines will always need to be met, there are opportunities for firms to incorporate balance into their culture for a healthier, happier future.

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It’s common to think of technology as a barrier to positive work/life balance. But in reality, firms that rely on cloud software are opening up an entirely mobile way of working, promoting a more nimble and efficient way to practice law.

These app-based or web browser services, Google Docs and OneDrive for example, not only eliminate the need to be physically present to be productive, but allow lawyers the ability to collaborate and communicate in real time. Product liability lawyer [Rob Sullivan](#)



Options such as working remotely, four-day work weeks and job-share opportunities not only help boost morale and promote healthier employees, but allow lawyers the chance to get things done that would otherwise interfere with their work schedules. This flexibility can be especially appealing to working parents, lawyers in the office looking to continue their education or people with other responsibilities that require time away from the office.

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