

The Administrator Advantage

Legal management professional titles vary by firm and may include Executive Director, Director of Administration, Chief Operating Officer, Business Manager, Firm Administrator, Office Administrator, Branch Manager, and so on.

Sample Summary of Responsibilities

Manages business functions as well as the overall operations of a law office. Reports to the managing partner, management committee or Chairman of the Board, and participates in management meetings. In addition to general responsibility for financial planning and controls, personnel administration, and systems and physical facilities, the legal administrator identifies and plans for the changing needs of the organization, shares responsibility with the appropriate partners or owners for strategic planning, practice management and marketing, and contributes to cost-effective management throughout the organization.

Whether directly or through a management team, the legal administrator is responsible for most or all of the following:

Financial Management:

Including planning, forecasting, budgeting, variance analysis, profitability analysis, financial reporting, general ledger accounting, billing and collections, cash flow control, banking relationships, investment, tax planning, tax reporting, trust accounting, payroll, pension plans and other financial management functions.

Human Resource Management:

Including recruiting, selection, training and development, performance evaluation, salary administration, employee relations, motivation, counseling, disciplining, discharging, benefits administration, workers' compensation, personnel data systems, job design, resource allocation and other human resource management functions for the legal, paralegal and support staff.

Systems Management:

Including systems analysis, operational audits, cost/benefit analysis, computer systems design, programming and systems development, information services, records management, library management, office automation, document construction systems, information storage and retrieval, telecommunications, litigation support, legal practice systems and other systems management functions.

Facilities Management:

Including space planning and design, purchasing, inventory control, reprographics, records storage, reception/switchboard services, telecommunications, mail, messenger and other facilities management functions.

As a member of the organization's management team, the legal administrator manages and/or contributes significantly to the following:

Operations/Management:

Including strategic and tactical planning, business development, risk management, quality control, organizational development, firm planning processes and other general management functions.

Practice Management:

Including lawyer recruiting, lawyer training and development, legal assistant supervision, work product quality control, professional standards, substantive practice systems and other practice management functions.

Marketing:

Including management of client profitability analysis, forecasting of business opportunities, planning client development, marketing legal services and enhancing the firm's visibility and image in the desired markets.

Job Requirements

Knowledge:

Has knowledge of legal or other professional service organizations, and has experience managing business operations such as human resources, technology, facilities, finance and marketing.

Skills and Abilities:

Can identify and analyze complex issues and problems in management areas, and recommend and implement solutions. Can manage office functions economically and efficiently, organize work, establish priorities and maintain good interpersonal relations and communications with lawyers and support staff. Displays excellent supervisory and leadership skills. Demonstrates willingness and ability to delegate.

Education:

Graduation from a recognized college or university with major course work in business administration or management, finance, human resources, technology or marketing, or comparable work experience. Professional certifications a plus, including Certified Legal Manager (CLM)[®] designation.