



# NEW JOBS *for* NEW TIMES

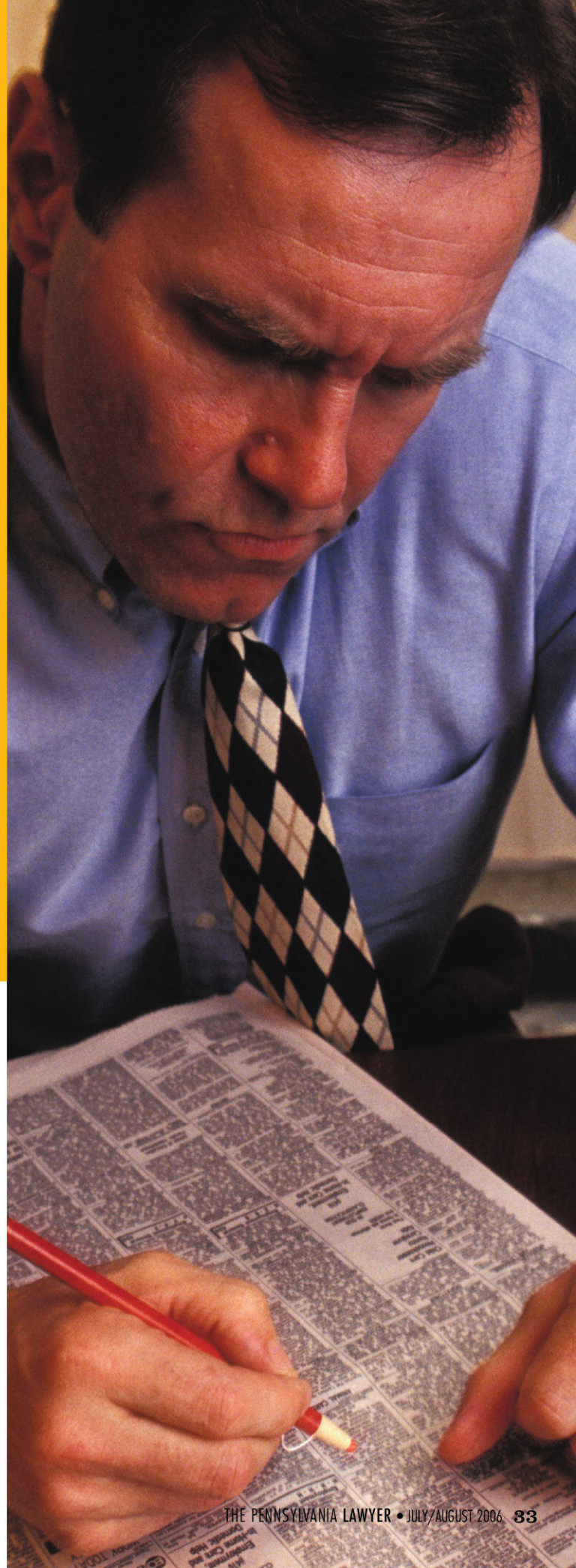
By Steven A. Meyerowitz



Taking a page from the corporate world, law firms are adding a variety of new positions to help their lawyers and staff, to benefit their own operations and to improve their relationships with clients

**J**eannine M. Rupp has a great title — director of professional and personal life integration — and a great job. Using her recruiting and human resources background, as well as the master of science degree in organizational and social psychology she recently earned from the London School of Economics, she helps her employer deal on a daily basis with “work/life balance” issues. That is important in today’s world, given the various significant personal problems tugging at workers, from child care concerns to the need to help aging and ailing parents to the desire for more flexibility at work.

What’s unusual about Rupp’s position, however, is that she doesn’t work for a typical *Fortune* 500 company or widget manufacturer. Rather, she is employed by a law firm, Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Nicholson Graham L.L.P.





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### **A Cultural Change**

For quite some time in the profession, the typical law firm consisted of lawyers and legal secretaries and perhaps a receptionist at the front door who was also in charge of answering the phone. As the complexities of their practices have grown, many firms have added to their staffs accountants or other employees with financial responsibilities. The use of computers has led to the addition of computer specialists as part of a law firm's information technology department. And marketing and client development personnel began to blossom in the 1980s and 1990s.

But Kirkpatrick & Lockhart's addition of Jeannine Rupp and of Carl Cooper, the firm's chief diversity officer who works with firm management and other firm personnel to design and implement an agenda that promotes, achieves and maintains a diverse workplace, are different types of additions altogether. The firm added these two senior positions in a proactive effort to improve the working lives of the firm's lawyers and other employees, with an expectation that this would also enhance the delivery of legal services to clients.

Other firms are taking similar action. For example, Duane Morris L.L.P. has a chief

operating officer, a tax accounting director, a director of office services, a chief information officer and a director of real estate and facilities. It also has a manager of training and professional development, a manager of credit and collections, a business research manager in its library and a lateral partner client intake coordinator in the records department, not to mention a manager of ancillary businesses. All of these positions at Duane Morris go beyond the staff positions that traditionally have directly serviced lawyers or clients.

### **A Growing Trend**

As the director of recruitment for Wisnik Career Enterprises Inc. in New York City, Jennifer Johnson sees this trend and is an active participant, helping to fill numerous law firm positions in her role as a recruiter. Johnson says she has noticed that some of the new law firm jobs are focused outward, including the positions of marketing and client relations directors. Others are focused on taking care of business inside a law firm.

Johnson points out that some firms are hiring “client analysis people,” employees who do an analysis of a firm's top 100 clients and their businesses. These staff members conduct both qualitative and



# POSITIONS VACANT

## GENERAL

quantitative research on emerging business trends in an effort to determine “what the next thing is that will be hot.” Significantly, these positions generally are available only for candidates holding a master’s degree in business administration.

Marketing departments are becoming more sophisticated, too, she says, noting that firms are hiring business development writers, marketing technology specialists and marketing specialists for individual practice groups. According to Johnson, they are bringing public relations in-house, “figuring that they can get for a yearly salary someone who is more entrenched in the day-to-day life of the firm” than an outside consultant working for a PR firm.

### Professionalized Management

Certainly, there are a number of reasons law firms are creating this wide range of new positions. According to Deborah Addis, Boston-based president of law firm consultant Addis & Reed Consulting Inc., the breadth of these positions “shows how law firms are moving to more elaborate and more professional organizational structures.” In her view, these new jobs are “the positive and

inevitable result of the growth in law firm size and a direct reflection of the increasing focus on professionalism in law firm management.”

Addis says organizational-behavior positions such as those filled by Jeannine Rupp and Carl Cooper at Kirkpatrick & Lockhart are being created by law firms to make people within the organization “happy and fulfilled, both professionally and on a personal level.” These jobs are “important for employee retention,” she adds, and are an outgrowth of law firms having hired professional human resources managers. According to Addis, these HR professionals are helping firms decide on the kinds of programs they need in order to hold on to their employees, especially given that “most people have life issues to deal with: aging parents, growing families, moving from one place to another, divorces and deaths.” She adds that she’s even heard of law firms creating special positions in-house for counseling on alcoholism and substance abuse. “These are real problems and real issues that people face, and it’s not that unusual to have these kinds of things be issues for employees of law firms.”

Addis says she believes it is better for law firms and for their management to face





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all of these issues head-on rather than to have them “fester” while lawyers and staff members are trying to deal with them and at the same time do client work and bill a substantial number of hours every week. She sees these new positions as reflecting a trend “toward the softer side of management.” They assist in creating a culture in a firm that makes it feel like a friendly place to work. A lot of companies pride themselves on being selected as a “best” place to work, and she observes that “law firms are learning some lessons from these larger corporations. They are doing what they are doing for employee retention on the one hand and marketing to keep clients happy on the other.” In Addis’ view, this is a “direct result of the professionalization of management in law firms.”

### **Can Small Firms Follow?**

Although much of the activity to date in this area has been in large national or international law firms, smaller and medium-sized firms can offer similar assistance to their employees. Indeed, Addis said she believes that smaller firms can do many of the same things that larger firms have begun to do even if they do not “break things out functionally” and add separate positions to focus on these problems. In other words, smaller firms can have their



director of marketing or business development or their other senior administrators handle some of the same functions and deal with some of the same issues that people such as Jeannine Rupp and Carl Cooper are handling at Kirkpatrick & Lockhart.

The trend here is that law firms are focusing on lawyers and other employees as human beings, recognizing that the issues they face outside of work can impact their productivity and their ability (and desire) to work. It may not have been something that most firms thought about a decade or two ago, but the corporate world was different in the past, too. Law firms can no longer prosper under the system they used to follow, when only work and the workday were considered in decision making and where some senior lawyers and the managing partner made all significant decisions and had their commands executed by legal secretaries. Now, a well-managed law firm, following the corporate model, must be more structured, more functional, more professional and more sophisticated. The corporate model has arrived in the law firm world. At least to the extent that it benefits lawyers and other law firm employees, the change would seem to be very positive. ☼



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- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions;
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism;
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