

Practice Group Management

Creation of highly effective practice management structures, policies and systems is perhaps the greatest challenge facing law firms today. Law firms compete primarily at the practice level. Therefore, practice groups must be rigorously focused externally in order to compete successfully and be well ordered and managed internally to support those competitive efforts.

Altman Weil has been at the forefront of conceptualizing law firm practice management needs and structures. We have also pioneered training of practice leaders as they seek to upgrade necessary skills in order to lead and manage more effectively.

- **Practice Group Structure and Policy:** Practice management structures are evolving, but not all law firms are at the same stage of development. While there are certain elements required by any firm in order to be successful, there will be firm-specific dynamics and characteristics that must be considered when deciding a structural policy. A firm instituting practice management initially will differ from a firm seeking to upgrade or refine its structure. Altman Weil will make recommendations based upon market-influenced realities, firm orientation and culture, as well as a firm's current state of development.
- **Practice Groups and Firm Governance:** Throughout our decades of working with practice groups it has become clear that if groups are not directly linked and accountable to senior firm leaders, group management will likely not be as effective as it can be. We will help you design a governance structure in which practice group leaders are operationally and strategically linked with senior management to ensure appropriate allocation of resources, development of strategic plans, evaluation of group effectiveness and accountability.
- **Developing New Practice Groups:** Organizing a new practice group is like starting a new business. Managers of the proposed groups and firm leaders should treat the endeavor as entrepreneurs would, evaluating all key considerations—strategic focus, firm interdependencies, market/client need, positioning relative to competitors and expected profitability—before authorizing the new group. Altman Weil has developed a template for use in developing new practice groups, holding aspirants to high standards before allowing new groups to be formed and investments made. We can help you determine if there is a solid business case for a new group in your law firm.

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- **Assessing Practice Group Effectiveness:** Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for law firm management is to develop practice groups that are highly effective, operate in the manner for which they are intended and serve the firm well. We have developed a litmus test for practice group effectiveness and can help you evaluate individual or multiple groups in terms of their overall operations. We address such issues as group leadership and role clarity, group membership, group strategy, and profit levers, as well as superior client service.
- **Practice Group Strategic Planning:** Altman Weil has developed a unique Strategic Planning Tutorial and Workbook for practice group leaders. For over a dozen years we have helped practice leaders develop highly effective strategic plans that are market-focused, specific, measurable, and achievable while still being challenging. In our work with hundreds of practice groups, we have seen many strategic plans developed that are simply ineffective. Our Tutorial and Workbook serve to ensure that your practice groups will develop useful plans.
- **Marketing and Business Development:** A practice group is an externally oriented, competitive unit. We work with groups to develop specific marketing and business development goals, strategies and action plans. We help law firms develop plans that can work and that are collaboratively oriented within and across groups. We seek to link plan development to client needs and market opportunities.

How You Benefit:

By systematically addressing practice group structure, leadership, planning and business development, your law firm will become more effective internally and more competitive in the marketplace.

See why Altman Weil is the leader in legal consulting. Visit www.altmanweil.com or call (610) 886-2000 to learn more about our services.