

Collegial to corporate: Law firms are changing, partner

Over the past 30 to 35 years, the practice of law has evolved from a "professional calling" - something akin to a noble intellectual pursuit of truth and fairness - to a service business.

Truth, fairness and intellectual honesty still no doubt are critical and distinguished aspects of the profession, but today in the larger metropolitan areas a law practice truly is a business. This is true not only for the national and international megafirms but also for the local two-lawyer firms.

The shifting economics have had a significant impact on a time-honored institution: partnership in a law firm.

Perhaps the single most important force driving the change is eroding profit margins.

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