

Steve D'Amore Discusses Winston's Approach to Associate Development with *The American Lawyer*

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Co-chair of Winston & Strawn's Litigation Department Steve D'Amore recently discussed with *The American Lawyer* how the firm is changing the way it utilizes younger attorneys to provide them with more training and offer them more opportunity.

Steve noted, "Many years ago, when we created practice groups within the litigation department, we allowed the most junior associates to remain unaffiliated, so they didn't need to declare a 'major' early on. We didn't want to pigeonhole people, we wanted to let them develop their skills and interests. More recently, we created a special practice group made up of those unaffiliated junior associates, to give them the support of a practice group setting and foster greater engagement."

Steve said the firm embraced a structure and culture of learning for its most junior lawyers. He likened it to how doctors learn the ropes at a training hospital.

He also discussed how the firm recently changed its process for staffing associates.

"When I came to the firm, and until recently, when a new case came in and it needed to be staffed, the partners on the new case would be responsible for staffing it, down to the most junior level," Steve said. "That tended to reinforce old practices and people would go to associates they knew best, resulting in inequality in the distribution of work."

He said the firm now requires that junior associates on new matters be staffed using a centralized assignment process that can quickly map associates to relevant opportunities, ensuring an equitable distribution of opportunities on a range of matters.

Read Steve's full commentary in *The American Lawyer* [here](#).

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