SpencerFane®

Spencer Fane Doubles Down on Culture with Organizational Redesign

Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce the creation of a new internal organizational structure designed to offer an alternative to the traditional law firm model as the firm doubles down on a long-standing commitment to making culture its strategy for serving clients and managing its business.

"Our firm is transitioning away from the traditional top-down hierarchical structure and organizing in a manner that resists a 'command and control' bureaucracy in favor of a design intended to nurture a culture of empowerment, autonomy, and accountability," Spencer Fane Chair Patrick J. Whalen said. "Within our firm, we see the shift as a movement, not a mandate, that comes in response to a shift in the optimal structure providing both the support attorneys need to serve clients at the highest level and the opportunity for continuous personal growth and improvement."

The new structure trades the vertical hierarchy of a traditional law firm for a structure that separates the firm's management tasks into two parallel lines of accountability – internally facing Talent Teams and externally facing Market Teams, both of which are led by a diverse group of Spencer Fane attorneys.

"Unique about the parallel structure is that one does not report to the other, which is an element of the design intended to minimize bureaucracy within the firm by providing dedicated support on professional development and client projects while empowering attorneys to explore together how to best serve the evolving needs of clients," Whalen said. "We are aiming to evolve a 150-year-old static law firm model into an organizational design that emphasizes trust and accountability by providing each attorney in the firm direct access to support for managing their client work, while empowering teams to self-organize in pursuing shared interests in the market."

Talent Teams

The firm's internally facing Talent Teams are designed to provide resources to attorneys and client teams that support continuous improvement in areas such as professional development, client-centric staffing, and financially efficient utilization and leverage. Every attorney of the firm belongs to one of three internally facing talent teams. Led by Talent Team leaders, the groups will support Spencer Fane attorneys in the following ways:

- Provide support to professionals joining the firm as they integrate into the firm and make connections with colleagues;
- Connect professionals with resources to help them manage workload, personal growth, and engagement;
- Connect attorneys with colleagues across the firm to encourage collaboration, and serve and support clients in new ways;
- Encourage professional development, continuous self-improvement and goals for achieving career aspirations;
- Serve as a confidant or sounding board for navigating challenging situations while also acting as a point-of-contact for questions, concerns, or ideas; and
- Capturing valuable feedback on how the firm can best support its people and clients.

Market Teams

Externally facing Market Teams are designed to serve as the leading edge the firm's client development initiatives. The structure is designed to provide pathways for attorneys to form teams around common service areas or other specializations with a great deal of flexibility to meet the evolving needs of clients. For example, Market Teams may take different forms ranging from multidisciplinary teams serving clients in a particular industry segment to teams addressing a client need in a specific geography. The aim is to empower market teams to collaborate in more effective ways in service to clients.

"The Market Team concept is an outgrowth of what we've witnessed is possible by several highly successful teams across our firm; by formalizing a process for

attorneys to create teams from the ground up, we hope to continue cultivating an environment where more attorneys can realize the benefits of the same type of collaboration," Whalen said. "The Market Team structure is designed in response to a growing appetite among our attorneys to have the autonomy to invest their time and attention in areas that align with their strengths, passions, and their client's needs."

In turn, the program launched with more than 60 Market Teams created based on interest expressed on behalf of attorneys and clients. The first phase of launching these Market Teams is underway with more than 30 currently active across the firm. The teams are intended to provide the following opportunities:

- Encourage collaboration by bringing attorneys together in pursuit of addressing an existing or emerging client need;
- Provide attorneys the autonomy to join and form teams as opportunities arise;
- Design teams that are self-driven, self-organized groups with all members playing an active role with the group;
- Opportunity to lead and participate in a variety of client development activities ranging from the creation of events and community engagement to developing insights and solutions to client problems; and
- Provide attorney teams coaching, client development resources, and financial support. Every attorney at Spencer Fane receives a marketing budget and additional support will be made available to Market Teams.