**XIV. HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR JOB**

As all of the preceding information indicates, it takes a lot of time and effort to obtain legal employment. It also takes a lot of time and effort to succeed in that job. Your goal is to build a reputation for excellence and to expand your network of contacts who will assist you in finding future employment. Below is a checklist of things that you should do to make sure you succeed.

* Realize that the Professionalism advice above applies equally to law school and your legal employment – you are building your reputation and should always behave in a professional manner.
* Promptly return phone calls and emails.
* Make sure you understand what type of response an assigning attorney wants (oral or written and, if written, what format), and how long the attorney anticipates it will take you to complete the assignment.
* Complete work in a timely manner.
* Make sure all assignments look professional – no coffee stains or frayed corners. This also means not relying on spell check alone and taking the time to carefully read over your work for typographical and grammatical errors before submitting it.
* If you cannot complete an assignment by the deadline, communicate this to the assigning attorney as soon as possible.
* Use the attorney’s preferred means of communication – sometimes email is not adequate and you need to speak with someone in person.
* Related to the prior point, take some time to learn about generational differences so you can understand those you are working with and their expectations.
* A study of top-performing associates indicated that when they receive an assignment, they:
	+ Talk to somebody else who worked for the assigning attorney.
	+ Read similar work product produced by the assigning attorney so their product is similar.
	+ Check in with the assigning attorney so there are no surprises.
	+ Include a “next steps” section in the document.
* Once you’re an associate, realize that the tools that led to success as a law student are not all the same ones that will lead to success as an associate. Spending all of your time in your office working hard will mean that you are missing out on opportunities to build relationships with more senior attorneys. If they don’t know you, they won’t offer you the better assignments or bring you along to a client meeting. A lot of business is done at social functions, and you will miss out on a lot of opportunities if you do not participate.