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## **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF LAWYER**

Professional competence of lawyer is very important for future lawyer. At the core of legal profession conduct is a lawyer's duty to provide competent representation to his or her clients. Today, this means that lawyers are expected to take reasonable steps to understand how technology may affect their legal representation. Innovation, which is so highly prized, is primarily an attitude and willingness to think and act differently.

Concerning with actual skills: a ready proficiency or applied ability acquired and developed through training and experience; degree of character, diligence and intelligence as innate characteristics; skills acquired through the application. If a lawyer possesses these skills in sufficient abundance, he\she will be fully qualified to practice law.

From this point onwards, while these skills remain necessary, they are no longer sufficient: they constitute only half of the set necessary to practise law competently, effectively and competitively. Here is the new six-pack, the other half of tomorrow's — no, today's — minimum skills kit for lawyers.

1. Collaboration skills. This is not just about “working well in a team,” essential as that is. This is about the ability to function in a multi-party work environment such that the process and outcome transcend the collective contribution — the whole surpasses the sum of the parts. Thanks to technological and social advances, this is how work is going to be done from now on. Lawyers who collaborate well possess the ability to identify and bring out the best others have to offer, to submerge their own positions and egos where necessary, in order to reach the optimal client outcome. Collaborative lawyers trust the wisdom of the group; lone wolves and isolationists don't do any good anymore.

2. Emotional intelligence. Future lawyers are drilled in law school and in practice that they have to detach themselves emotionally from their cases and clients in order to offer the best advice. Clients need lawyers' empathy, perspective and personal connection to feel whole and satisfied; colleagues also need engagement, respect and understanding to do their best and help each other's succeed. Distant, detached lawyers are relics of the 20th century — the market no longer wants a lawyer who is only half a person.

3. Financial literacy. This is a widespread issue, recently identified by ‘The Economist’ as a factor in the subprime meltdown and other economic woes. But there’s no excuse for lawyers to remain so steadfastly clueless about money: running a business, balancing a ledger, understanding tax principles, working with statistics, calculating profit margins, even explaining the rationale behind their fees. Too many lawyers with Arts degrees just shrug and say, “I was never good with numbers” or “They never taught me that in law school.” Not good enough: every client and every case involves money in some way, and every lawyer in private practice is running a business of one size or another. Financial literacy is essential.

4. Project management. It is a growing refrain among clients, a chorus of frustration that most lawyers have zero skills in project management. Some lawyers would not even be able to define it: planning, organizing, and managing resources to successfully complete specific objectives while maintaining scope, quality, time and budget restrictions. Lawyers seem pathologically unwilling to estimate time or budget costs and incapable of creating and managing a plan of action, presumably for fear of failing or being caught shorthanded. But today, everybody project-manages: it’s SOP in corporate life, and lawyers are the only ones in the business chain who seem to have missed the memo.

5. Technological affinity. Technological affinity is a core competence of lawyering. If the lawyer can’t effectively and efficiently use e-mail, the Internet, and mobile telephony, he might as well just stay home. And if you don’t care to learn about RSS, instant messaging, Adobe Acrobat and the like, clients and colleagues will pass by such lawyers.

6. Time management. Law is demanding hard work. But a substantial part of lawyers’ difficulties in this regard lie with their inability to prioritize their tasks and manage their time. Lawyers are terrible at saying “no,” they’re awful at delegating work into more efficient channels, and amazingly, many are still compensated not by the tasks they accomplish but by how long they take to do them. Lawyers who will not or cannot learn to manage their time will continue to blame all around for their difficulties, if they do not burn out or are fired first.

Lawyers simply must possess these six core skills if they want to make a living in the 21st century. Law schools need to teach them; governing bodies need to test for them; law firms need to make their lawyers expert in them.