

Leading the Canadian Law Firm in the 21st Century

BACKGROUND

- CBA has taken steps to become more engaged with managing partners of member law firms, and those firms have indicated a willingness to collaborate more with CBA.
- One initiative is providing professional development to managing partners and lawyers aspiring to that position.
- A group of managing partners, supported by National staff, created an opportunity for law firm leaders to engage in dialogue, discussion and learning around issues facing Canadian law firms. The program, entitled *Leading the Canadian Law Firm in the 21st Century*, was held first in Halifax in 2005. Promotional material for the Conference included this description: “Intense competition, rapid technological change, demanding expectations of clients and changing attitudes of lawyers and staff are realities in the operation of today’s law firms. As a leader, your priority is to ensure the stability and growth of your firm. Join industry experts, managing partners and in-house counsel for an in-depth analysis of the latest challenges and techniques to address issues such as marketing, leadership, compensation and recruitment.”
- Subsequent programs were held in Halifax (2006) with a focus on conflicts, risk management and retention of talent; Montreal (2007 and 2008) with a focus in 2007 on practical solutions to law firm effectiveness and in 2008, with a particular focus on the future of the legal profession and a “bootcamp” for “up and coming” law firm leaders.
- The fifth program was held in Toronto (2009). Its focus was “change management for law firms.” It included two bootcamps, one for new leaders and one for those with more experience. Roundtables of Managing Partners have been held in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Winnipeg, focusing on the future of the legal profession and conflicts of interest. Further roundtables will be held throughout 2011.
- The sixth Leadership Conference was held in Toronto (2010), with a “best practices for change management” theme.

CURRENT STATUS

- The seventh Law Firm Leadership Conference was held in Vancouver in October 2011. Its focus was on the needs of smaller, mid-size and regional firms.

NEXT STEPS

- CBA is developing a new professional development initiative for managing partners of very large firms. We are currently in the consultation phase.