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The 51st Best Law Firm For Women? The Anonymous Lawyer Weighs In

By Ashby Jones



Make no mistake: We're all for law firms becoming better places to work, especially for working mothers, many of whom, in order to fulfill their duties both as lawyers and moms to youngsters, have to lead super-human lives. We're all for flex-time and support groups and part-time partnering.

So we do — honestly — send out our hearty congratulations to all those deserving firms who were included on Working Mother's list of the [50 Best Law Firms for Women](#). But here's the issue: we got so flooded with press releases on Tuesday from law-firm PR folks looking for a little mention that, yes, they too were on the list, that our head started to spin. It wasn't made any better by the fact that the releases were all so similar. A squib about the award, a quote from the managing partner, a quick reference to mentoring, maternity-care policies, day-care, and on and on and on. Zzzzzzzz.

So, with that in mind, we called upon Jeremy Blachman, aka the [Anonymous Lawyer](#), to go at the topic with a bit of his inimitable humor. (For those who missed, it Jeremy [penned a piece](#) last week on law-firm layoffs, which, it seems, provoked a few laughs.) In that same vein, here's Blachman's take on how one fictional law firm who didn't make Working Mothers' Top 50 might have explained it to the troops:

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To: All Partners, Associates, and Staff
Re: Women, and Other Categories of People

We have received a number of e-mails this week asking why, once again, we failed to make Working Mother's list of the 50 Best Law Firms For Women. Why we don't have private lactation rooms, and nutrition experts coming in to speak during lunch about the proper diet for pregnant women. Why we don't have a three-day women's retreat every year. Why we don't devote half our recruiting budget to specifically attracting women. Why we don't offer reduced-hour mentors to women who want to work a reduced schedule. Why we don't display children's artwork on the walls or hold baby showers for expectant mothers. Why we don't give out "Future Lawyer" Onesies to all new parents on staff. And why we don't offer maternity leave, paternity leave, or health care to children.

Well, we apologize, because we've tried. Newer folks may not remember, but last year, we did everything we could to get on the list. We matched working mothers with mentors at the firm who are also working mothers, but unfortunately, we discovered that just because you're both working mothers doesn't mean you'll like each other. After one partner stole an associate's baby, we were forced to end the program. We also decided to lead the industry with a month-long women's retreat where we talked about our feelings, but, sure enough, some women decided they'd rather spend that month at home, with the families they never get to see. Another failure. We went beyond private lactation rooms and opened public lactation rooms in the atrium. And no one even used them. We replaced the Kandinsky in the lobby with Billy Simpson's fingerpainting. And people complained. We had baby showers, but no one drank the champagne. We gave out baby clothes, but they turned out to be flammable.

And, you know what, no one cares about the lists we do make. We're one of Working Diabetic's 50 Best Law Firms, due to our decision to stop serving cake at law firm events and to cancel our weekly bagel breakfasts. Now, we celebrate birthdays with water, making us heart-healthy and diabetes-friendly—but does anyone congratulate us? No.

Working Personality Disorder just named us to its Top 10 Law Firms list, due to our large population of partners and associates with obvious mental issues, unprovoked tantrums, unreasonable demands, and rampant screaming in the halls. But has anyone noticed the plaque in the conference room? Not that we're aware of. And, finally, Working Child named us its Firm Of The Year, due to our widespread employment of children to perform many of the menial tasks that we need to accomplish at the firm. But no one's thrown us a party, not even the children.

So we give up. No more lists. And, hey, maybe that's a good thing. Because you know what? We're a Law Firm. We focus our energies on practicing law, and serving our clients. You want to be a lawyer, and have a baby? Great. Have a mental illness? Great. Diabetes? Terrific. We'll continue paying you, if you continue getting your work done. But it doesn't matter if you're a man, woman, neither, or both. We'll treat everyone the same: relatively poorly, and with no concern about what you do outside of the 168 hours a week we require you spend in the office.

Sincerely,
The Firm.