



During a -34 degree weather strategic planning retreat at Lake Mille Lacs, Minn. in December 1996, the founders of Nilan Johnson Lewis authored a statement of principles focused on six different areas. Firm leaders attest that these core values serve as the basis for the firm's day-to-day direction, guiding major decisions related to client matters, employee appointments, compensation and more. Below are the firm's six original and unchanged core values as well as a depiction of some of the ways they have come to life at the firm.

TRUST: Valuing honesty and communication, and having the confidence in one another's motivations to candidly yet respectfully resolve differences.

- **HORIZONTAL.** The defining characteristic of the firm's letterhead, which does not contain a distributed hierarchy of attorneys; instead, the management system is designed to make everyone accessible and available;
- **ZERO.** Nilan Johnson Lewis' origination "bonus," it's a non-entity, and is neither tracked nor fought over, keeping everyone on track with only team-based client service in mind.

EXCELLENCE: Seeking constant improvement in the quality of work and service to clients, and being committed to investing in even closer partnerships with clients and greater sophistication in delivery of top legal services.

- **FIVE.** The number of practice areas that we focus on in order to provide excellent service for our clients. They are product liability/mass tort, commercial litigation, labor & employment, health care, and business law.
- **SIXTEEN.** The number of events held by our professional development committee in 2010. This committee provides training and mentoring opportunities to assist all members of the firm in achieving excellence in the practice of law and enhancing professional satisfaction, while meeting the needs of our clients.
- **SIX.** The number of consecutive trial victories a shareholder at our firm secured within fourteen months, while also training for a marathon.
- **TWELVE.** The number of open, collaborative neighborhoods throughout our space to encourage a constant dialogue and interaction since we are stronger as a team.
- **NINETY-THREE.** The percentage of clients on a past NJL survey that said our lawyers either meet or exceed their expectations.

DIVERSITY: Recognizing that all talented people can lend value to the organization, and are committed to affording opportunities not only for women and minorities, but also for those with different backgrounds or lifestyles to share their talents productively.

- **FORTY-NINE.** The percentage of women attorneys at the firm, far outpacing the national average of 29 percent. Fifty percent of the firm's shareholders are also women, nearly 3 times the national average;
- **2010.** The year NJL won the Minnesota Women Lawyers' Leadership Award that recognizes legal employers throughout the state that strive to enhance the status, influence, and effectiveness of women lawyers.

CORE VALUES

- **SIX.** The percentage of Nilan Johnson Lewis GLBT attorneys, which outperforms the national average of two percent.
- **THREE.** The number of times Nilan Johnson Lewis has received a Hennepin County Bar Association Diversity Award in the last seven years. This award recognizes legal employers who display an outstanding commitment to diversity in the legal profession.

INNOVATION: Dedicated to a creative office environment and structure that anticipates and meets clients' changing needs.

- **10 X 15.** The size of all the offices in the firm — whether for shareholders, associates, or paralegals. This de-emphasizes any sense of hierarchy and allows for resources to be focused on conference rooms and other spaces used by clients;
- **58.5%.** The percentage of building materials that were extracted and manufactured regionally for our office construction, exceeding the LEED standard of ten percent. Our office is LEED certified which exemplifies our commitment to being environmentally conscious and minimizing waste.
- **5,664.** The number of water bottles that are saved from landfills annually because of the water filtration units that are built into the firm's conference rooms and coffee stations.
- **ZERO.** The number of commissioned art pieces in the space. The design of our space emphasizes simplification, absence of ornamentation, and function over form as a reflection of the firm's client-focused approach to a modern law practice. We put most of our resources into our public spaces for our clients.

PROFITABILITY: Seeking to earn a fair profit as a return on the investment of skills, experience, time, and resources, and to share financial success with all those who make it possible.

- **100%.** Nilan Johnson Lewis has doubled its revenue since inception (1996), with total 2010 revenues topping out at more than \$25 million;
- **450%.** The firm's client volume has followed the revenue growth, increasing from 100 in 1996 to 450 today.

COMMUNITY: Treating each other with respect, and providing an environment where people share a sense of excitement and enjoyment and can flourish in both their personal and professional lives.

- **ZERO.** Number of corner spaces used for offices. We believe this space is best utilized for collaborative spaces, so the views can be enjoyed by all employees and clients.
- **THE VENUE.** The name of our common gathering area that provides space for our employees to come together and celebrate our personal and professional achievements and to encourage dialogue since we understand that our internal culture has an impact on our clients' experiences.
- **FIFTEEN.** The number of community organizations that we support through direct involvement and/or pro bono work. This includes volunteering, serving in leadership positions and sponsorships.

Industry Data Source: National Association for Law Placement