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KATE FRUCHER: LEADING LAWYER



Under Kate Frucher's leadership, Axiom Legal has pioneered a modern alternative to the traditional law firm by providing onsite counsel services to large corporate clients. Axiom attorneys have the opportunity to do challenging work in-house with leading corporations, yet are part of the Axiom firm and community. By allowing attorneys to choose how much they want to work and the kinds of things they

want to work on, Axiom offers women more control, balance and exceptional quality of life. Since joining in 2005, Frucher has been directly responsible for more than doubling revenue to almost \$30 million last year.

Perhaps even more impressive is Axiom's attrition rate which is around ten percent, well below the roughly twenty-percent turnover at a typical law firm. Historically, female lawyers working in firms have had little choice but to work full-time, which, in the legal field, constitutes as much as 15 hour days. Balancing life outside of work is seen not only as a challenge, but in some cases a weakness. The women attorneys at Axiom credit Frucher for freeing them mentally from having to make those difficult choices.

From launching the Americorps National Service Program as part of a small Clinton White House team, to serving under Mayor Rudy Giuliani to overhaul New

York City's child welfare system, Frucher has always looked for ways to make a difference by forging new ground. When New York City, along with the rest of the country, witnessed the devastation of 9/11, Frucher took on the position of senior aide to the Fire Commissioner. She played a critical role for the fire department at an important moment in history, putting much needed protocols in place that are being used to this day.

Concurrent with her position as the General Manager of Axiom's New York headquarters, Frucher has been a senior fellow in the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Since graduating with honors from both Harvard College and Stanford Law School, this crusader has built a portfolio of credentials far more impressive than most people dream possible. Fortunately for us, we're all benefiting from her unwavering and admirable devotion to public service and private practice.

KIM HOULNE: PERFECT BALANCE

As the mother of two young boys and the founder and chief executive of a successful business, Kim Houlne knows the challenges of being a working mom. And her brainchild Working Solutions is largely based on this concept.

The company contracts with home-based agents to provide customer service to leading brands, including Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Office Depot, Cingular and Kodak, in a variety of industries. This virtual workforce includes more than 600 women agents, all of whom are motivated and led by Houlne, which has meant low turnover and high growth for the company.

Houlne saw the demand for viable work-at-home employment and seized the opportunity, creating a great environment for her workers in and out of the office. The proof is in the employees: For the last two years, Houlne's corporate staff nominated Working Solutions as a "Best Place to Work" in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and it ranked within the top 20 both years.

Her staff credits her calm, cool demeanor—even in the face of challenge and adversity—as one of her impressive strengths. When Houlne and her senior managers met with a big client for

a performance update in the early stage of the business relationship, the client offered their feedback in the form of a report card. Working Solutions received mostly positive marks, but scored an F in one category. Although Houlne was surprised and disappointed to receive the low grade, her response was to smile and say, "Wow, I have never received an F before, but at least now I know we can only go up from here!"

Instead of assigning blame or pointing fingers, Houlne gathered her team to brainstorm next steps and decide how to best improve client relations. She leads not through fear and intimidation, but rather through positively soliciting opinions and avoiding criticism and personal attacks.

In addition to keeping clients happy, she's a hands-on pro at making sure staffers are satisfied too. On several occasions, Houlne has gone above and beyond to ensure proper work life balance and job satisfaction by making schedule adjustments, revising job functions, or even creating a new role entirely. And when some employees seem to be doing just fine with the workload assigned, Houlne comes along and gently pushes them to reach new goals to expand their knowledge and skill sets.

