

7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LAWYERS

LEANNE WARREN



1 Treat clients with compassion and empathy

Clients come to see a solicitor to obtain advice about important life issues. Put yourself in their shoes.

2 Communicate

Regularly communicate with your clients – update them on the progress of their case and the legal steps/process involved, clarify their expectations and set realistic goals.

3 Preparation is key

Read and absorb every document and have good lists to locate things in the event that your memory fails you.

4 Delegate

You can't do it all, no matter how hard you try. Although it may seem quicker to do it yourself in the long run it is much more efficient to delegate tasks and teach others.

5 Get your priorities right

Time management and organisation skills are important. Prioritise your workload to ensure the most urgent deadlines are completed first, and don't leave the hardest decisions until last. This effectively saves time, reduces stress levels and creates a productive environment.

6 Have support

Ensure you have effective support staff. This will allow you to concentrate on what you are best at.

7 Allow time away from the office each day

Am I going to walk around the block for 30 minutes?
Am I going to have coffee with a friend in a non-legal environment? Down time during the day makes you more efficient when you return to work. ■

Leanne Warren is the managing partner of Leanne Warren & Associates, a specialist criminal law practice. She has been practising as a criminal lawyer since 1986 and became an LIV accredited specialist in criminal law in 1995. She is a member of the Criminal Law Specialisation Advisory Committee and a former member of the Criminal Law Section executive of the LIV.