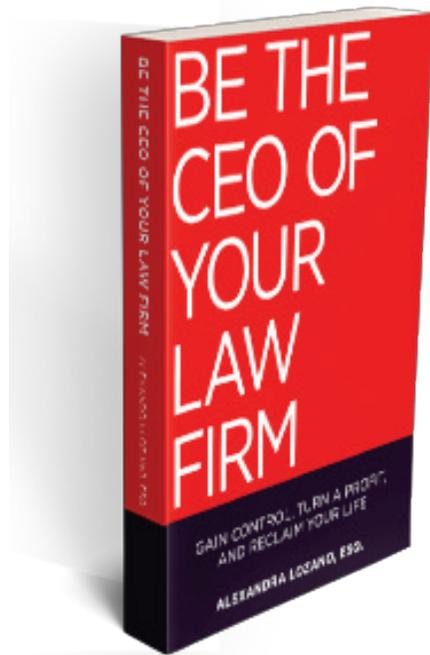


*Excerpt from*

**Be the CEO of Your Law Firm**

**Author: Alexandra Lozano, Esq.**



# Introduction

“I show up every day and work hard for my clients.”

“If I really care about the cases, I will not charge for them.”

“I feel I am not experienced enough or as good as other attorneys I know, so who am I to charge any more?”

“I only want to earn enough just to get by. I do not need much more than that.”

“My clients can barely afford my fee, so I make sure my prices are accessible.”

“After a long day, I go home knowing that I’ve done all I can to help my clients.”

“I do not like talking about money so I choose not to; after all, I went to law school to avoid having to deal with numbers and math.”

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This was me for the first two years of my solo practice. I call it the Associate Mindset. This mindset is precisely why my law firm was failing to make ends meet. I was basically showing up for work at my own firm, acting as though someone else was going to write the checks, manage the phone calls, and bring in the clients. All I wanted to do was focus on the work and go home.

That’s the way most solo practitioners run their law firms. They start their firms because they love the work that they do, and by having their own firm, they can do what they love. But they don’t want the hassle of dealing with the business side of the practice or being the business person they need to be in order to have a successful solo practice.

At the start of my law career, I worked in two different firms, both of which were toxic, cutthroat, and unsupportive work environments. When I left to start my Seattle law firm in 2012, I had learned nothing about running a law firm. I was still merely an associate attorney. I had no business acumen. I had no desire to build a business. All I wanted to do was practice law.

Soon after, I moved to Mexico, where I spent the next two years running my Seattle law practice from Cabo. I determined I only needed to earn just enough “pesos” to get by. I traded spending long office hours writing briefs for watching beautiful sunsets on the beach while writing briefs. I traded happy hours for hammocks. I was living the dream.

Truthfully, in all my tropical bliss and peace, the way I was handling my law practice was actually stressing me out.

I had no idea how much money I was making or whether there would be enough money in my bank account to pay the few bills I had.

I had no idea who was paying me and who wasn't because I didn't want to worry about the financials and I “wasn't in it for the money.”

I was working an unhealthy number of hours, yet I always worried whether I could squeeze out some semblance of a salary.

I wouldn't answer the phone sometimes because I was either too busy or because it simply stressed me out.

Though my cases were organized, my firm was not. I was overwhelmed with trying to do case work, manage clients, and run a legal practice. I was still stuck in the Associate Mindset, and all I wanted to be was an associate attorney in my own law firm. I didn't want to worry about the financials. I didn't want to ask clients to pay my fee. I would say, “I just want to do the work.”

Getting a paycheck was necessary to survive, but I insisted that it not be my obsession. Yet living without enough money creates a money obsession in and of itself because you are always worried about running out of it.

If you, too, are stuck in the Associate Mindset, you probably are:

- Failing to bill clients
- Always thinking you're doing your clients a favor by not billing for fees
- "Waiving expenses" (which is basically failing to bill for them but with justification that you are doing it for the "good of the client")
- In the dark about the firm's finances
- Disorganized (file disorganization, e-file disorganization, financial disorganization)
- Not concerned about collecting your fees because the case was rewarding
- Working around the clock
- Lacking the necessary staff to manage day-to-day business functions
- Afraid to hire staff and/or delegate tasks
- Spending less and less time at home or with family and friends and more time pulling all-nighters

I wasn't satisfied with this lifestyle, and I'm willing to bet that you aren't either.

## **Are You Ready to Be the CEO of Your Law Firm?**

Let's face it ... being an attorney is hard. It is more of a calling than a career. We care about our clients. We care about the causes. We think about our cases all the time. We are constantly connected to the job. But we are suffering from financial chaos.

After two long years in this battle with myself, I realized I wanted to love more than just my work; I wanted to love my life. I didn't become an attorney to be poor. I decided that I needed to make a living that would make all of this worth it to me.

I needed to become a business-minded attorney, which meant that I had to do more than just practice law. I came to understand that a law firm is a business, and I needed to run it like one. I needed to Be the CEO of My Law Firm in order to create a financially successful law practice.

I began to hold myself accountable so that I could make a real, tangible plan for empowering myself to gain control of my business and my finances.

The first thing I needed to do was stop thinking like an associate. I had to rid myself of thoughts like:

- “I’m the only person capable of doing the work and no one can do it as well as I can.”
- “My legal work is separate from the rest of the firm’s tasks.”
- “I work for work’s sake and getting paid is less important than doing great work.”

To transition from an Associate Mindset to a CEO Mindset, I developed a CEO Mantra, which I recommend that you copy and place on your wall to remind yourself every day of what you’re trying to accomplish:

## **The CEO Mantra**

- 1. My life does not fit the firm, the firm fits my life.**
- 2. I know that great work has value and getting paid is an exchange of value.**
- 3. I work the hours I desire because I am in charge of my life.**
- 4. I have a work schedule that accommodates my home life.**
- 5. I see all aspects of running my firm as equally important.**
- 6. I know billing is essential for the firm's success and honors the excellent work the firm does.**
- 7. I will delegate masterfully because I know I cannot do it all.**
- 8. I do recognize that others possess the skills necessary to perform quality work.**
- 9. I shall perform carefully selected tasks that could not be delegated to anyone else or because I enjoy doing them.**
- 10. I will hire the right people who can perform the work well.**

Once I started thinking like a CEO, things took off quickly. In my new role, I started making small, incremental changes within my law firm. And three months later, my firm was earning six figures. In less than a year, my firm's revenue had doubled. Now, we are well on our way to earning seven figures.

I want you to do the same.

Everything that I share here is what I have learned in my journey toward becoming the CEO of My Law Firm. These are hard lessons learned after making many mistakes, picking up the pieces, and trying again.

Every bit of advice that I give here has been tested, refined, and re-tested. I put them all together in one place to help you Be the CEO of Your Law Firm and experience more success than you've ever dreamed of.

## **Embrace the Six Roles & Responsibilities as the CEO of Your Law Firm**

As the CEO of Your Law Firm, you must handle the following Six Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Creating Your Vision and Strategy (as the *Chief Executive Officer*)
2. Marketing Your Services (as the *Chief Marketing Officer*)
3. Taming Your Finances (as the *Chief Financial Officer*)
4. Managing Your Firm (as the *Chief Operating Officer*)
5. Cultivating Your Relationships (as the *Chief Public Relations Officer & Chief Sales Officer*)
6. Attaining Client Satisfaction (as the *Chief Communications Officer*)

The whole idea is that you cannot be an associate in your own law firm. You own your law firm, you don't work for anyone. It's just you. I am a successful solo; being the CEO and being a solo practitioner are one and the same.

There is a chapter dedicated to each one of the six roles and their corresponding responsibilities. Each is a crucial element in attaining a successful law practice. To put it simply, you must manage every single one of these. They are nonnegotiable.

As the CEO of Your Law Firm, you will need to determine what responsibilities you will handle and what you will delegate. This means that because we are solo practitioners, we have only two choices: we either do it ourselves or hire someone to do the tasks for us.

Bookkeeping, answering phones, copying files, creating forms, and tracking expenses are all examples of just a few day-to-day tasks that are keeping you from performing the most important work in your law firm—gaining and keeping clients.

One of the most significant lessons I have learned in becoming the CEO of My Law Firm is reframing how I view the act of spending money. We often think of things we pay for—such as salaries and marketing—as expenses or costs to our firm.

We instead need to see each cost as an investment. Every time you spend money to help accomplish your Six Roles and Responsibilities, you are empowering yourself and your law firm.

For instance, a phone-answering service, a virtual assistant, a case management program, and a top-of-the-line scanner are all investments I made to make my law firm more efficient and profitable—the higher the efficiency, the higher the profit.

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I have grown and changed a lot since I first decided to become the CEO of My Law Firm. I have more staff now, so I don't use a phone service anymore. And with a consistent flow of clients, more than 7,000 Facebook followers, and a marketing strategy that is measured and tweaked on the fly, I am now in a position to offer what I've learned to help you build a profitable legal business.

Remember that becoming the CEO of Your Law Firm is a journey, not a destination. As you continue to grow and change as a practitioner, you will need to tweak and reevaluate many aspects of your firm—*e.g.*, your marketing strategies, your client relationship man-

agement, and your office procedures. Though my firm is fully streamlined now, each time I bring on a new staff member, I have to recalibrate and modify our systems.

I have come to understand that with any business, there is no point where you can say, “I have arrived.” Businesses are constantly growing, changing, evolving, and taking new shape.

Becoming the CEO of Your Law Firm involves a process of trial and error—learning from each mistake and from each right action and taking small steps forward. Sometimes, it will feel like you’re only moving forward an inch at a time, and that’s okay.

All I have done is taken a series of small steps forward. I know that you can experience success, too, and here’s why:

Two years into owning my law firm and running it from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and barely making enough to survive on pesos, I was visiting Seattle when a hurricane hit my home in Mexico and I lost everything.

I was stuck living in one of the most expensive cities in the country running a law firm that would have been more aptly considered a nonprofit.

I didn’t have a place to live. I didn’t have furniture. I like to say that I didn’t even own a fork. Did I mention that I was also seven months pregnant?

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There is no doubt in my mind that you are in a more financially secure place than I was at the start of my journey.

I still managed to build a six-figure income from practically nothing, and I know that by taking the right steps, you can, too. Success does not happen overnight. It has taken laser focus, hard work, and dedication. Along the way, I have been able to align myself with some great people, many of whom have been a part of my team.

I want you to know that there is nothing magical about what I am doing. There is nothing mentioned in this book that you cannot do. When I decided to become the CEO of My Law Firm, I went looking

for a secret to success that I believed had to exist somewhere. I thought that if someone could just tell me the steps to how to build a successful law firm, I would do it.

Unfortunately, I never found that resource anywhere, but I worked hard to uncover the secrets for myself. And despite all of my successes, I do not have all the answers. I am learning every single day. I am changing, evaluating, and adjusting things all the time.

I want to share what I have learned through my struggles in order to make your journey easier. Throughout this book, we will cut through the fluff and dive directly into helping you raise your perspective and your bottom line. Use this book to take copious notes, and above all, use it to chart your course to becoming the CEO of Your Law Firm!

#### About the Author:

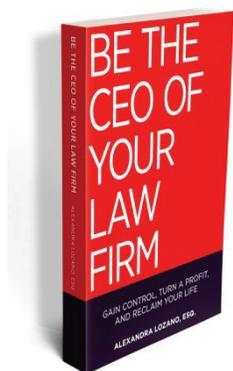


**Alexandra Lozano** is a nationally recognized and award-winning immigration attorney. She is the founder of Alexandra Lozano Immigration Law PLLC, based in Seattle. In 2015, Alexandra's law firm went from struggling to make ends meet to earning six figures in less than three months, and by 2017 earned into the seven figures.

Alexandra is passionate about teaching other attorneys how they can transform a law practice into a thriving business. She

empowers attorneys to be the CEOs of their law firms with her weekly blog, webinars, inspirational 6-Minute CEO Facebook Live show, Six-Figure Solo Membership, and the annual Women, Power & Money in-person conference where she provides women attorneys with step-by-step guidance on how to do the work they love while running a profitable legal business. She is also the founder of the international network, the Association of Mother Immigration Attorneys (AMIGA Lawyers).

## About the Book:



***Be the CEO of Your Law Firm: Gain Control, Turn a Profit, and Reclaim Your Life*** (with a foreword by Annaluisa Padilla, President, American Immigration Lawyers Association); 2018 Edition (Ramses House Publishing); **\$19.95 (Print)**; 194 pages; ISBN: 978-1-7320825-0-2 (*Print*)

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**Review Copies and Media Interviews:** For a review copy of ***Be the CEO of Your Law Firm*** or an interview with attorney Alexandra Lozano, contact Alexandra's team at [info@allylozano.com](mailto:info@allylozano.com) or + 1.415.763.8212.

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