

ON THE GLORY of Being Managing Partner

Firm leadership is an affair of the heart — you either love it or you don't.

Compared to the practice of law, being a managing partner places very different demands on you. Let's look at a few.

- ❖ You are moving away from what you feel highly competent at doing (practicing law) into an area where you feel like a fish out of water. And it can feel like you really *are* living in a fishbowl, since a new leader's every action will be watched by partners, staff and sometimes even clients. You can expect that they will attach great significance to your every move. Something you might *not* expect is that you will no longer be just one of the gang, and in some cases peer relationships may take on a somber feel. Sometimes that feeling will translate into a sense of being unpopular. As a leader, it's just a fact that you can attract criticism—and so you must remain resilient.
- ❖ And especially resilient in dealing with people. It has been estimated that a managing partner may expect to be interrupted an average of *three times every hour*. This is compounded by a need to deal quickly with any workplace conflicts. Those conflicts can often involve having to initiate changes that you don't necessarily agree with and having to accept compromises to get your ideas implemented.
- ❖ Implementation means accepting responsibility for results. And achieving results is often dependent on the attitudes and actions of others. This can be challenging when some partners demonstrate low levels of personal accountability for themselves. When bad things happen, you have to shoulder the responsibility of all decisions, actions or inactions that allowed those things to happen.
- ❖ And finally, the glory includes an expectation that you work even longer hours.

Being managing partner ... what's not to love!