

What Title on Business Card for Long Term Associate?

My associate has been with me for 8 years, but has no interest in becoming a partner. She likes her 8:30 to 4:30 hours.

So for ages and ages, I have referred to her as my associate. But I want the world to know her importance to the success of the firm.

I am about to order a new batch of business cards, and thinking about a change in title for her. Maybe "Senior Attorney" or "Senior Counsel"

The big firms call folks that don't become partners a "staff attorney," but I think that is demeaning as it implies that the person wasn't good enough to become a partner.

Looking for some input here

Thanks,

Senior Associate?

Erin M. Schmidt, Ohio

Of counsel?

Kathleen Balthrop Havener

Partner non equity?

Roger Rosen

No, no. Non-equity partners are the unappreciated and underpaid worker bees in the world of big law. I'd vote for Senior Attorney or Senior Counsel. I don't think I would go with Of Counsel because that implies a specific type of relationship.

Jon van Horne

Given the level of her importance to you, my secretarial advice would be to ask her what she would like and arrive at an appropriate title together. It's nice to see you acknowledge her importance.

Marilou, a nonlawyer

I like "Senior Counsel" ahead of the other choices.

You could personally refer to her as your "colleague" from now on instead of "associate".

Russ Carmichael

What does SHE want? I like "Counsel" because it implies permanence. When I was in BigLAW I rejected an equity partnership because it meant a pay cut, but I was still referred to as a Partner.

Kathleen Balthrop Havener

Why can't her business card just say "Attorney" or "Attorney at Law"? That is what ours all say - even the attorney who is of counsel.

I've found that most clients don't care specifically what it says, but do want it to clearly indicate that you are an attorney (as opposed to a paralegal). While other attorneys know that an "associate" is clearly an attorney employee, your regular person client does not know that.

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

Senior Counsel or Senior Associate. But what's in a name anyway? The fact that you value her as an important member of your firm speaks volumes. :)

Anna D. Collins Ford, Paralegal

At the other end of the spectrum, what's the generally-accepted rule for a bar candidate who is awaiting Bar results?

My impression is that BigLaw firms just call them "associates" and they don't lose any sleep over it. (Maybe I'm wrong.) But, for us ordinary folks, what's the ethics-compliant title?

Cheers,

David Allen Hiersekorn, California

David:

I believe you are a law clerk until you are admitted.

Justin Meyer, New York

If you aren't yet a partner, but they want to bump your title, BigLaw sometimes calls you "Special Counsel."

Adam Handwork, Virginia
