

PUBLICATION

Baker's Dozen: An Entrepreneurial Spirit

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In a professional landscape that rewards initiative, cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit requires more than just technical expertise. For those launching their careers, it is about stepping forward with curiosity, embracing the awkwardness of new connections, and viewing every interaction as an opportunity to learn. For seasoned leaders, it means identifying and nurturing the resilience and emotional intelligence that drive long-term growth. Ultimately, an entrepreneurial mindset transforms a job into a vocation, fostering a culture where individuals take ownership of their success and the success of their clients. We invited professionals to share their insights on how to foster this spirit and the characteristics that make it thrive.

What advice do you have for younger professionals on how to adopt an entrepreneurial spirit?

1. "Stay curious, take initiative, and don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves. Your entrepreneurial spirit will grow as you build relationships, ask questions, and look for ways to connect people. When you show genuine enthusiasm, others naturally want to support you – and that energy can really propel your career."

- Corinne Dennison, Principal, tHRive



2. "Build relationships, become invaluable to your clients and develop their trust, even with people who may not be in high-ranking positions, now. You must think long-term, as strong relationships can last a lifetime!"

- Emily Stroope, Baker Donelson, Dallas



3. "Ask questions first and listen carefully. Each business has individual needs and what works for one might not work for another."

- Marcela Molina, Sr. Corporate Counsel, Benchmark Senior Living



4. "Never blend in."

- Charline Gipson, City Attorney, New Orleans



5. "Maintain and interconnect your personal network throughout the year."



- Paula Estrada de Martin, Baker Donelson, Houston

6. "EXPERIENCE begets expertise. Expertise begets great projects and challenges to work on. It's often hard to build a better mousetrap if you don't know how the existing one is made."



- Heidi Hoffecker, Director of Development, The Orange Grove Center, Inc.

7. "Adopt an owner's mindset early. Learn the business of law as deliberately as you master the art of practicing law. Learn from your mentors how clients are developed, how the business works, and how decisions are made. Take smart risks by working on projects slightly outside your comfort zone, build relationships before you "need" them, and treat every task as an opportunity to earn trust. Entrepreneurship isn't about doing everything by yourself; it's about building purposeful relationships and playing the team sport well."

- Vivien F. Peaden, AIGP, CIPP/US, CIPP/E, CIPM, PLS, Baker Donelson, Atlanta

What do you believe to be valuable personal entrepreneurial characteristics and why?

8. "Generosity of spirit and active listening."



- Will Fagan, Baker Donelson, Atlanta

9. "Be insightful, confident, push yourself to be a self-starter, and continue to learn and be knowledgeable in your area."



- Monique Beals, Law Offices of Monique N. Beals

10. "Resiliency - to start again after failure; creativity - to do something different that others want to buy; risk tolerance - willingness to crash and burn for the chance at success."



- Erin Greten, Baker Donelson, D.C.

11. "Emotional Intelligence and the ability to know when to take charge and when to let others lead."



- *Simi Khangura, Managing Director, Head of Litigation and Employment Law, ORIX*

12. "Curiosity: Asking questions and seeking new perspectives drives innovation and better client outcomes. Adaptability: Being flexible in approach allows you to navigate changing client needs and firm priorities."



- *William Wildman, Baker Donelson, New Orleans*

13. "The ability to create genuine connection through conversation."



- *Lindsay Ray, Baker Donelson, Nashville*