

Executive Profile

DAVID SKINNER

MANAGING PARTNER, MEYERS NAVE P.C.

Company: A firm of about 90 attorneys specializing in public agency law affecting cities, counties, special districts and the like.

HQ: The firm's largest office is in Oakland. It has offices in San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Los Angeles, Fresno and Sacramento.

Background: Skinner started at Meyers Nave in 1991. He became managing partner in 2011.

First job: Through the public school district in Santa Clara, I was a janitor during the summer in high school.

Education: J.D., University of California, Hastings College of the Law; B.A., history and political science, University of California, Berkeley.

Residence: Moraga.



Business strategy

How's business: We're healthy. We've been fortunate to increase market share and our level of expertise during these difficult economic times.

What's going to change at your company in the next year: We are actively seeking growth opportunities. While public agencies continue to struggle, there are areas that they need assistance in. There are areas of law my firm specializes in that are expanding and growing to respond to the needs of our clients. We're continuing to increase market share throughout the state. We're in a growth mode right now.

Goal yet to be achieved: For the firm, the goal is to increase our market share. We are a statewide public agency law firm. As healthy as we are, there are still opportunities we have to grow and expand.

Management philosophy

Guiding principles for good management: Three of them. Be an active listener. Be bold during challenging economic times. Thirdly, part of our growth and expansion strategy: hire carefully.

Best way to keep competitive edge: Stay hungry and avoid complacency.

Why people like working for you: My mentor when I came here was Mike Nave. He was a firm believer in the "work hard, play hard" approach. I've done that, and that is why people like to work with me. We work very hard, and it's important to play hard.

Mentor: Mike Nave. He has been retired for many years. He came from an era when a lawyer's word was as good as gold. It was all about integrity and honor to your word. That is what I learned.

Judgment calls

Best business decision: Without a doubt the decision my firm made to take our firm to the next level, to really go for it and look internally to see what is working and not working, and build on that to come to the decision that we've all come to: seek growth and expansion opportunities to go for greatness.

Hardest lesson learned and how you learned it: There is always the fish that got away, a proposal that did not quite make the grade. I think it's important to keep a competitive advantage to make sure we're putting out the absolute best topnotch team that we can.

Toughest business decision: When we made a decision during challenging economic times to take an internal look at ourselves and come up with strategies to grow and expand the practice. It's also the most difficult.

Biggest missed opportunity: I would go back to any time you miss out on a proposal for new business.

True confessions

Like best about job: I like best that the people I work with share the same core values and culture. It's a real pleasure.

Like least about job: I don't like billable hours. The whole idea of billing for your time.

Pet peeve: Delayed flights.

First choice for a new career: When I was younger I thought I would be a high school history teacher and baseball coach.

Predilections

Most influential book: "Team of Rivals," by Doris Kearns Goodwin and "Lincoln," by David Herbert Donald.

Favorite cause: Doctors Without Borders.

Favorite movie: "Field of Dreams."

Favorite restaurant: Anywhere where they do steak the right way. Also Zachary's Pizza.

Favorite way to spend free time: With my kids, and I like to run.

On your iPod: Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra.

Automobile: Volvo XC 60.