

# Retreats 2.0 – The Value of Forced Firm Fun

“I don’t believe in ‘retreats,’” a managing partner of a law firm once told me. “Even the name implies something negative. I prefer to focus on the future.”

Perhaps there is some truth in that statement. A retreat – in whatever form fits a law firm’s culture – is essential for the firm to move forward and be successful. Law firm retreats provide the opportunity to “press pause,” assess where the firm has been and carve out a plan for the future. A retreat offers a place where [attorneys can connect on a personal level](#) and form stronger bonds, benefitting the law firm, and – ultimately – the firm’s clients.

## Assessing the past and collaborating for the future

According to Albert Einstein, insanity doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. We are all guilty of getting in a rut or becoming overly confident about the way we do things, but frequently, we find that the way we “have always done it” is not netting the results we want.

Assessing our past – the good, bad and ugly – in a collaborative environment can help teams identify what needs to change and which strategies should be repeated. At times, it can also uncover hidden talents among staff. This kind of assessment takes time, though, and especially given the distraction of iPhones, Apple Watches and laptops, a genuinely thoughtful discussion can’t happen over a rushed lunch. For a meaningful analysis to occur, law firms need to make the time to focus. A retreat needn’t be held at an expensive offsite venue – although offsite helps – but will require the commitment and focus of everyone involved, no matter where it takes place.

## Storytelling

In today’s content-rich environment, a retreat can be the perfect opportunity to share stories from your daily experiences with your clients. Did someone in the firm win a significant case? Did a marketing or business development strategy work? Did a case not go the way the attorney had wanted? What were the tactics that worked? What didn’t work? An [excellent case study may be revealed](#), providing additional fodder for marketing purposes.

To make the most of the event, involve the marketing team in planning and executing the retreat. They see the firm from a different angle and can use the time to gather fresh ideas for how to better market the firm.



**Stephanie Kantor  
Holtzman**

Vice President  
Public Relations  
240.381.5382  
[sholtzman@jaffepr.com](mailto:sholtzman@jaffepr.com)

## Training

While most retreats need to include sessions about the firm's financial health, try taking a step away from the expected and using the time to offer [marketing- and business development-focused training sessions](#) for your attorneys. Many attorneys need help with figuring out [how to use social media effectively](#), such as LinkedIn for professional purposes. Others will want to learn how to become [more effective networkers](#). Those associates you've seen slurping their soup? Consider holding a fun but informative [etiquette training session](#).

Plan the types of breakout sessions that will help the firm reach its goals, but be sure to make them lively and enjoyable.

## Have *Fun!*

Don't forget the fun factor. A retreat is a time for firm attorneys and staff to relate to each other as people, share fun experiences and find out what they have in common. Do something unexpected and different. You may just find those fantastic business ideas being hatched once you're outside a conference room!

At Jaffe, our retreats focus on having fun and getting to know each other better, with serious discussions about the future of our firm sprinkled in, but we always push ourselves out of our comfort zones. Our retreats have included ghost tours, zip lining and spotting alligators on swamp tours. While this represents time away from the office, we discuss client work and come up with new ideas. We have all benefitted from the collaborative spirit that is fostered during this time, and our clients have, too.

If you want to discuss ideas about how to make the most of your law firm's next retreat, contact me at [sholtzman@jaffepr.com](mailto:sholtzman@jaffepr.com).