

Team meetings lead to success for Chinn & Associates

Law firm sees high marks from peers, clients and employees.

JACKSON — When prominent family law attorney Mark Chinn organized Chinn & Associates, PLLC, on July 1, 1988, he was determined to craft a law firm around a system built for and around people rather than “a cold, impersonal machine.”

Chinn has handily accomplished that goal. His law firm has received the highest rating possible from Martindale Hubbell Publishers and has been listed in Martindale Hubbell’s “Registry of Preeminent Lawyers” in the field of family law. Chinn has been selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America in family law.

Located in Suite 200 at 4316 Old Canton Road in Jackson, Chinn & Associates, PLLC, is one of five 2004 Better Business Bureau Business Integrity Award finalists in the category featuring 11 to 99 employees. The law firm has a dozen employees.

Associates motivate, empower one another

“Mark Chinn is constantly inspiring and motivating his associates and support staff,” said Kellye Smith, marketing director for the firm. “Because this process begins in the interview, only associates who are dedicated to the firm’s success are hired. This ensures that employees will motivate and empower each other. For example, two members of the staff have quit smoking while in the employ of Chinn & Associates. Also, each week, the entire Chinn & Associates team meets to talk about the firm and the different cases on the docket. This gives team members an opportunity to express things they’ve learned and also ask for help from the entire team. The issues are then discussed and resolutions are found. During these team meetings, articles that were distributed previously during the week are also discussed. The focus of the articles can range anywhere from overcoming adversity to achieving personal success.”

Chinn’s law firm has received the highest rating possible from Martindale Hubbell Publishers and has been listed in Martindale Hubbell’s “Registry of Preeminent Lawyers” in the field of family law.



The law firm holds weekly award ceremonies where support staff and associates are recognized in categories such as spirit, service, corporate athleticism, excellence, teamwork and employee of the week.

“The employee in receipt of the award from the previous week selects someone else to give the award to, thus encouraging a feeling of camaraderie and appreciation among the entire staff,” said Smith.

Because the law firm houses sensitive information, strict policies and procedures for documentation are followed on a daily basis. The guidelines are easily accessible to team members, and a checklist is implemented into the firm’s daily routine. When unforeseen circumstances occur, team meetings are held to determine methods to prevent the incident from recurring, said Smith.

Best interests of their clients

To build and maintain positive client relationships, client files are noted electronically with important events, such as birthdays and special occasions. “A call or note is something small that may take five minutes, but it makes the client feel as if they have hired more than a person to defend and protect their assets and livelihood, they have hired someone who is genuinely out for their best interest and success,” she said.

Newsletters are distributed to clients twice a month, encouraging feedback.

“We want to know if we’re doing everything we can to

help them or if there is something we could do better,” said Smith. “For example, we always include a motivational or inspirational quote at the end of our newsletters to uplift our clients. In our August newsletter, we included the John H. Aughey quote: ‘God brings men into deep waters not to drown them but to cleanse them.’ At the bottom of the newsletter, we included a feedback questionnaire. One client wrote that the above quote hung in her home when she was a girl. Seeing it in a newsletter from the attorney she had hired made her feel that it was the right decision hiring our firm, like God guided her to us to help her through some troubling times.”

Praise and support

To foster strong employee relationships, team members are interviewed quarterly, when they have a chance to discuss changes they believe need to be made. Random team huddles are held as needed.

“Other than monetary incentives and bonuses, Mark Chinn provides a constant source of praise and support,” said Smith. “Mark also sets a great example for his employees by sharing advice that is helpful in work or in our personal lives.”

“Just as John Donne’s ‘Meditation XVII’ suggests, no man is an island, no staff member at Chinn & Associates is completely alone. Every action we take is a direct result of the coaching and empowerment of the rest of the team.”

— LWJ