

MERGER DOS AND DON'TS

DO:

- Know what is expected before, during, and after the merger.
- Make an effort to understand each firm's culture.
- Assess the quality of each firm's practice.
- Look for red flags that the merger may be in trouble before it has been completed.
- Evaluate the potential impact of a merger on each firm's client base.
- Plan on lag time to convert databases, computer systems, client filing systems, and billing systems.
- Have an attorney draft a legal document that allows the firms to "undo" the merger, if necessary (the merger equivalent of a prenuptial agreement).

DON'T:

- Avoid telling employees what is happening once serious merger talks are underway.
- Assume employees understand what a merger really is or what it will mean for them.
- Underestimate the concerns of clients with regard to the merger.
- Ignore indicators of failure.