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Not a Lawyer and That's the Point: The Case for Redefining the Law Firm

Katie Langer · Tuesday, June 17th, 2025

In this episode of *The Mostly Legal Podcast*, hosts Rob Joyner and Amanda Koplos welcome John Bowers, CEO of Thompson Burton, for an honest, witty, and deeply impactful conversation. John reflects on his non-traditional path to leadership, why he proudly calls himself a “non-lawyer,” and what makes his law firm’s culture (including the compensation model) so refreshingly different.

But the conversation goes far beyond firm operations. John opens up about his role in launching the #LovedJenny movement, a powerful initiative to improve mental health support for legal professionals after the tragic loss of a colleague. From law firm transparency to the importance of business-minded leadership, this episode is a must-listen for anyone who wants to build a future-ready, people-centered legal career.

About the Guest

John Bowers

John D. Bowers serves as Thompson Burton’s Chief Executive Officer. In this role, he is responsible for developing and implementing the Firm’s business strategy.

Prior to joining the Firm, John served in law firm executive roles with a tax and estates boutique in Nebraska as well as the largest intellectual property boutique in Tennessee. He brings decades of law firm leadership in finance, technology, business development and marketing, facilities, attorney and staff recruitment, human resources and benefits operations.

John's career in the legal industry began in 2000 in the Accounts Payable Department of an *American Lawyer* 200 firm and he transitioned into progressively more consequential leadership roles with business development teams for Philadelphia-based firms including Fox Rothschild, Saul Ewing, and Duane Morris.

Active in professional and community organizations, John serves as:

- Board Member of the Battlefield of Franklin Trust
- Trustee at ClearView Baptist Church
- Chair of the Future Readiness Advisory Council of the Association of Legal Administrators
- Member of Messiah University's Law Professionals Council
- Mentor in the Entrepreneurial Leadership Program at Battle Ground Academy as well at the Williamson County Entrepreneurial and Innovation Center

He is an active member of the Middle Tennessee Association of Legal Administrators and the American Bar Association's Law Practice Division.

Episode Resources

[Thompson Burton PLLC](#)

[John Bowers on LinkedIn](#)

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