NJALA New Jersey Association of Legal Administrators
A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

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JER-Z-JOURNAL

A Quarterly Publication


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Jer-Z-Journal

NJALA Newsletter

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ON THE COVER

It is said that a hero is someone who strong, wise, responsible, generous, brave, or powerful. But a hero is simply someone who steps up to the plate when not expected to and helps someone out. Working in law firms, our lives are enriched with heroes. This issue is dedicated to all the heroes that surround us.

JER-Z-JOURNAL

IN THIS ISSUE

Heroes Abound

By Robbin Dollan

When we arrived at the theme of this edition of the *Jer-Z-Journal*, I was excited! What a novel way to think about those we work with, and work for, and are touched by in our everyday lives. Who can I name a hero at work? Well, when I really thought about it, there wasn't one staff person that I could leave out. They have helped me and our attorneys countless times, staying late, giving up their personal time, seeing that the job got done flawlessly, making our firm look great. They are the true heroes of my firm. I am sure you all have staff heroes as well.

Then I got to thinking about my experience at NJALA. Talk about heroes! It takes a special group of people to make the wheels of a non-profit turn. Why do we dedicate countless hours to seeing that this organization survives? After pondering the question, it dawned on me that the key has to do with the "organism" that is NJALA. It really is like a live, breathing entity. We cycle through board members and volunteers, the years pass us by, presidents come and go, and members retire. And still it lives on to breathe another day. Why is that? I think a lot has to do with the dedicated members that return every year, volunteering for committees, chipping in where needed, and providing much-needed advice, especially to new board members (and new presidents, for that matter!). Without them and their guidance the group might very well founder.

The past presidents who continue to attend meetings and remain active in the organization are heroes as well. Their input is invaluable. How else would we know who was achieving an anniversary, or how to handle an impossible boss? How else would we learn how to golf, and maintain such a superb and dynamic board? The past presidents have the life experience we can all learn from, which makes being part of NJALA a wonderful, fulfilling journey.

How can I leave out our Regional ALA representatives when thinking about heroes? I cannot imagine how they make the time to get all their work done, stay involved in their local chapters, live their lives, and then volunteer to be regional reps. They deserve many accolades for their dedication and hard work. I am sure they would appreciate any help our local members can give them, and I encourage involvement with this group.

Most of you probably have heroes who are friends and confidantes. They may have suffered tremendous loss in their lives, and rose up to overcome challenges. My personal heroes are those who carry on each day despite these life-altering roadblocks. One lady that comes to mind lost her husband at a very young age to cancer. She recalled pushing him in a wheelchair, in the snow, pregnant, from the Ronald McDonald House in NYC to the hospital cancer unit. She also had other setbacks in life that defy logic, yet she comes in every day, smiling and helpful. I don't know how they do it, and I am thankful that I have had the pleasure of knowing them, and hope to learn from their experiences.

We all have heroes who have mentored us in our life journey. Being a woman in the historically male-dominated field of engineering, finding a mentor was hard. I was often the only woman at the table. It was years before more women were hired and I was able to find friends with common life experiences. Still, I never found the mentor that I needed so badly in the engineering field, which is probably one of the reasons that I changed careers to the legal field. Now I have more female mentors than I know what to do with (Thanks Elli)!

Finally, I can't leave out my family of heroes. Sorry NJALA and Laddey, Clark & Ryan, but my family is my number one priority! I would have to say that my husband is my lifetime hero. He never bats an eye when I tell him I am working another Saturday, and he is always available on Sundays to fix the boss' desk drawer, or move furniture. And he is great at listening to me go on and on about my daily problems at work. What a guy!

I hope you can take the time to reflect on the heroes in your life and maybe try to be a hero to someone else you meet in your life's journey. This exercise was enriching and worthy, and I hope to continue to look for those every day heroes in my life.

Lured in By Cutting-Edge Technology? Learn Before You Leap

By Toni Marie Lesh, Lexis Nexis

As companies embrace new technologies they can't help but think about the associated security risks. News of the latest company to fall victim to a breach has become all too common. Whether you operate from a data center or the cloud, or both, are in research or retail, you must be proactive. Experts agree that companies require a multi-pronged, company-wide security strategy. One component of that strategy should be the use of the most reliable security to counteract the threats posed by your use of technology.

This article features an interview conducted with David Lingenfelter, information security officer for MaaS360 at Fiberlink, an IBM Company.

Threats Are Everywhere When You Go Mobile

Not to be an alarmist, but with attackers continually and creatively ratcheting up their game, you never know where the next attack will come from. The mobile device threats typically come from one of two directions, said Lingenfelter.

- From the outside: hacked apps and malware, particularly on the more-global Android™ systems, steal information. These programs are downloaded and maliciously find their way into your most vulnerable and valuable areas. Lingenfelter said compromised apps are prolific in third-party markets. Rogue marketplaces and unsecured WiFi network access also are sources for data risk.

- From inside: mobile devices in general are dangerous because the loss of a phone, laptop or table with corporate access can jeopardize vital data. A Symantec® study of purposely lost smartphones showed 83 percent had attempts to access business apps, 89 percent had attempts to access personal apps and 96 percent had attempts to access at least some type of data. Additionally, data can be jeopardized by poorly written applications and device vulnerabilities.

"Businesses should not consider mobile devices to be business as usual when it comes to security and where to focus security efforts," according to the Cloud Security Alliance's *Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Mobile Computing*. "Most of these threats are either new to the IT landscape or enhanced by mobile devices."

Security Technology

To counteract these threats, Lingenfelter said companies that build their own security systems can use wrapping technology. Wrapping adds a layer of authentication and security to the user. So, if a device is lost or stolen, additional passwords and verification are required to access critical areas.

For those dangerous apps, the industry is making a concerted effort to refine its search for malware and hacked apps. More and more, technology will focus on looking at apps and giving them an approval rating for security.

The real key, though, is to compartmentalize data using mobility management, so that there is no outside access to important information and processes. By installing software that has a "container"—a technology that has been on the market for about two years—Lingenfelter said companies can keep employees' personal activity, such as email, apps and photos, separate from business systems.

On a phone with no security, a dirty app or malware can drop an important file into a sharing application and then use the owner's private email to send it wherever the user wants. With container software, Lingenfelter said malware and hacked apps can't get in. They may try to access contacts and email, but they can't breach the container wall.

"Companies of all sizes can and should consider this an option," he said. "We're seeing more buy-in from larger companies because they have more concern and more employees. Smaller companies may trust employees, but from a corporate liability perspective, container software is extremely helpful."

Cloud Computing is Not All White and Fluffy

One of the fastest technologies for business is cloud computing. Companies favor it because it provides broad access, continuity, and collaboration for employees and cost-effective fluidity and growth potential for companies. What's not to like?

The cloud is not inherently less secure than traditional on-premises environments, according to Alert Logic's *The State of Cloud Security* Report. A study of users showed attack

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What Would You Do?

By Elli Albert

For this feature, each issue of the *Jer-Z-Journal* will pose a scenario that could occur in the law firm. Members were surveyed and asked how they might respond if faced with the particular situation. All responses, whether serious, sarcastic, or humorous, were encouraged. All responses are confidential.

Scenario: Your firm has a longtime partner who is over-demanding, highly critical, and difficult to please - you know the type! His/her secretary has now complained about the behavior and may walk out. Let's assume that swapping secretaries is not an option. You report this to your Managing Partner, but s/he wants YOU to deal with it. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

* * *

"I think honesty is the best policy. I would tell the secretary that, although there are issues, the partner is not open to changing secretaries. I would then have a conversation with the partner and tell him/her what the secretary took issue with and see if he/she is open to at least hearing the problems. Hopefully the awareness of the situation will make both of them a little more tolerant. If that doesn't work, draw up the ad and post it on Monster.com!"

"I would ask the partner to consider anything that can be changed in the way he/she addresses the secretary and to modify his/her "unreasonable demands" in an effort to keep the secretary. You may need to talk to the partner a couple of times before they get how their actions are being perceived, since people usually have a hard time seeing their behavior objectively."

"Tell the secretary that the firm has a non-discriminatory policy. The difficult longtime partner is that way with all support staff, so the secretary has been treated equally. The secretary should get over it and get to work!"

"After hearing the secretary's side of the story and arming myself with specific examples of the partner's unreasonable behavior and expectations, I would discuss the situation with the partner and seek the partner's commitment to modify the behavior. If that fails, and the secretary leaves, the partner will bear the brunt of the inconvenience of recruiting and training a new secretary."

"I would meet with that difficult partner, and would first emphasize how important the partner is to the firm. Second, I would discuss their behavior and how it is affecting their secretary. I would remind them of how frustrating it is to start over with a new assistant should the secretary decide to leave. Finally, I would remind them that their difficult behavior is opening the firm up for a lawsuit on the basis of harassment or hostile workplace. In the end, I would go back to the secretary ask for patience."

"The partner is likely well aware of his/her impossible nature and has not only accepted it, but probably thinks it's a good thing. Therefore, short of any violation of firm policy or employment law, tell the secretary that the impossible partner is the impossible partner. The secretary can try to minimize, anticipate, or otherwise mitigate the actions of the impossible attorney, but if the secretary can't live with that, then you understand their decision and are sorry to see them go. Have a chat with the impossible partner about tone and perception of their actions, but emphasize that you understand their desire for perfection, and aren't suggesting they compromise the work product. Don't be surprised when the secretary quits and the impossible partner continues their prior ways."

"Short of begging and pleading with the secretary to ignore or not take personally the offending behavior, I would just have to grab the bull by the horns and speak directly to the partner. Once the partner and I come to an understanding of what the issues are on both sides, I would then invite the secretary to join the conversation and I would play the role of marriage counselor. I have had to tell a male partner that he has a reputation for peeing on the toilet seat in the unisex bathrooms and not cleaning it up, so I should be able to handle this conversation."

"In my opinion, the Managing Partner is dumping this on you and he should not. You should request your MP (or equivalent) to join you in a meeting with the problem partner (informal visit) and the conversation should start with, 'I need to figure out a way to help you not show your stress and frustration. No one wants to work with you and that's a problem. How do we get you to treat people better so we can alleviate stress for you and them?'"

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Lured in By Cutting-Edge Technology?

(Continued from page 5)

frequency has increased in both on-premises and cloud hosting provider (CHP) environments. As more enterprise workloads move into cloud-hosted infrastructure, traditional on-premises infrastructure threats follow, the Report said.

In other words, organizations cannot rely on legacy approaches to security to support their cloud infrastructure. They must find solutions that deliver protection specifically for the cloud.

Before making the leap to cloud computing, you should consider the types of threats targeting cloud-computing environments, and whether your traditional security technologies can perform effectively there.

Lingenfelter said that just like with a data center, companies need to know where their cloud data is and what it is exposed to. His company is a data-management service—it doesn't store a company's data in the cloud. You need to ask questions of your cloud provider, he said. Where is the data being stored? In one or more countries? Is it partially in a data center and partially in a cloud drive? Is there a backup? Is it encrypted? With cloud, you have to ask those questions and make sure you maintain some level of control.

No device left unprotected

Hackers are relentless, sophisticated and diverse. They attack from multiple angles and with ever-newer tactics, putting company strategies, products and customer data at risk. It is critical that firms educate themselves on their application requirements for security and compliance, map those requirements to the right CHPs, source the right products, and build the right processes to manage events, incidents and ongoing security in the cloud.

Toni Marie Lesh is Territory Manager at Lexis-Nexis. She can be reached at tonimarie.lesh@lexisnexis.com.

A Quarter Past

February 2015

An educational session was held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. Tony Trama, Director of Security Solutions of Micro Strategies presented *Cyber Security – The Evolving Threat* which reviewed major breaches in cyber security that have made the headlines, how and why they happen, and what firms can do about it.

From left: Tony Trama, Microstrategies; Erika Negrin, Stativisky & Assoc. Doreen Marino, Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP.

A luncheon workshop was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at the Budd Larner, P.C. firm. Dana Nalbantian and Jennifer Ellis-Rosa from Gensler along with Tracy Nagel of Herman Miller presented *Part I – Legal Office of the Future*. Members took a look at design insights to the rapidly changing office environment.

March 2015

An educational session was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. Maureen Kolb, Founder of Cr8ive Energies presented *Retaining the Best and the Brightest* which provided members with the ability to measure retention in their firm and influence leaders to consider the importance of retaining the best and the brightest.

From left: Ken Winslow, Bederson; Teri Siegle, Ansell, Grimm & Aaron, P.C.; Audrey Serban, Fisher & Phillips, LLP; Fran Puntillo, Weiner Lesniak, LLP; Barbara Fisher, Merovitz Potechin; Maureen Kolb, Cr8iveEnergies.

A luncheon workshop was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at the Budd Larner, P.C. firm. Dana Nalbantian and Jennifer Ellis-Rosa from Gensler along with Tracy Nagel of Herman Miller presented *Part II – Legal Office of the Future*. Members continued took look at design insights to the rapidly changing office environment.

April 2015

An educational session was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. Jack Kukowski, Assistant Vice President of Herbert L. Jamison & Co., L.L.C., presented *Administrative Costs and Other Errors and the Cost of Professional Liability Insurance* which addressed why and how administrative errors are the second largest source of professional claims against law firms and provided practices, policies and procedures that reduce the cost of professional liability claims.

From left: Michael Harrison, Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, PC; Robbin Dolan, Laddey, Clark & Ryan, LLP; Jack Kukowski, Herbert L. Jamison & Co., LLC; Howard Vogel, Capehart & Scatchart P.A.

A dinner workshop was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at the Gordon & Rees LLP firm. Vincent Finaldi and Damon Finaldi from Tele-Data Solutions presented *6 Reasons Why Your Traditional Phone System is Hurting Your Firm* which addressed issues such as ways to reduce costs and improve communications through mobile applications and software tools.

Up to The Minute . . .

Summary of Minutes of the NJALA Executive Board Meetings Held through April, 2015

By Mary Beth Donoghue

The new Board of Trustees were nominated, elected and installed for the NJALA next fiscal year. 2015-2016 Board of Trustees are as follows:

Robbin Dolan, President; Doreen Marino, Vice President, Programs; Kurt Brown, Vice President, Membership; Audrey Serban, Immediate Past President; James Wostbrock, Treasurer; Mary Beth Donoghue, Secretary; Mary Ellen Dolan, Trustee; Gayle Englert, Trustee; Mitchell Rait, Trustee; Teri Siegle, Trustee; Jim Van Leir, Trustee; Elli Albert, Alternate Trustee; Elyssa Goldstein, Alternate Trustee; Nancy Harris, Alternate Trustee; and Louise Ruffo, Alternate Trustee.

President's Report

Robbin Dolan reported that ALA National proposed, and then passed, two bylaw amendments (concerning students' and legal consultants' ability to be members of ALA). NJALA will need to amend the chapter's by-laws sometime in the future to comply with ALA National. Dana Mooney is the NJALA's new regional representative. Audrey Serban is the NJALA's local regional liaison.

Robbin Dolan reported that NJALA has won the ALA Diversity & Inclusion Award competition, which allows the chapter to raffle off a free ALA Membership. This will be raffled off at some point later in the year.

Additionally, Michele Cohen was the winner of the Opportunity Knocks Program and Elyssa Goldstein was the recipient of the Sponsorship Program.

NJALA will be donating a gift to FALA for auction during the 2015 National Conference.

Membership and Business Partner Sponsorships

Membership and Business Partner Sponsorship renewals are all underway and progressing nicely. Several new members have joined and business partner relations remain strong.

Community Service

The Board was very pleased with the Bowl-A-Thon event that took place on February 21, 2015. This Community Challenge event was a great success and donations are still being sent in. All proceeds are for the benefit of the Interfaith Food Pantry serving Morris County.

Website/Social Media

The website is on its final stages of design and the members' database will be able to be uploaded shortly. The Board believes that members will reap more benefits from the new website.

NJALA now has a Facebook page. Like us on Facebook! A raffle will be conducted at the June social for a $100 gift card to one winner who has liked us on Facebook.

Hatches, Matches & Dispatches

By Cindy Landis

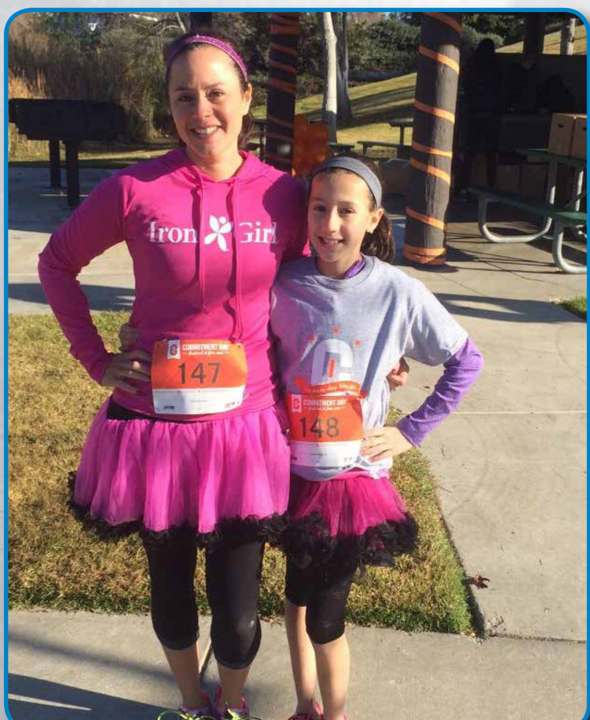
Although a cool day comes now and then, we can look ahead to warmer months.

My daughter, Carol, accepted a position at Washington College, a small liberal arts school, as an event planner. One day can be very different from the next, from planning board meetings to decorating the president's home for the holidays, to planning graduation. She and her husband continue to work on their new home as there is always something to fix, plant, paint….

My son, Steven, who passed both the New York and New Jersey bars, accepted a position at a law firm in Newark. As he is the youngest, and newest attorney at the firm, he finds himself "go to" traveling throughout the state attending court conferences. Oh, remember the days of being that young.

See what some of our NJALA friends have been doing recently…..

Audrey Serban (Fisher & Phillips) Audry reports the Serban family ran a 5k together on New Year's Day in Laguna, CA. Samantha and Audrey wore matching tutus. They had a blast!



Audrey and Samantha Serban

Ron Henry says that over Thanksgiving week Ron's son's family from Eleuthera and daughter's family from Leipzig rendezvoused on Anna Maria Island in Florida with Donna's family to celebrate her father's 99th birthday. Pictured are Chris and Liz holding granddaughter Norah as well as Amanda and Pilou holding grandsons Andre and Oscar...

The Leipzig Henry/Bazin family stayed with them in Skillman until the day after Christmas. They were also joined by the island Henrys where they all got to spend Christmas week together as well.

Thanksgiving vacation (Chris, Liz, Norah, Amanda, Pilou, Andre and Oscar)

Elli Albert (Fox Rothschild) tells us that her firm recently held a Bowling Night social. Numerous partners, associates, and support staff from both of Fox's Roseland and Morristown offices met at Hanover Lanes in East Hanover for an evening of bowling, food, drinks, and fun! The competition was fierce, and everyone really mixed it up: Attorneys teamed with staff, Roseland employees with Morristown employees, athletes with the athletically challenged (Elli says she falls into the latter category!), and new friendships were made. A great time was had by all as we cheered on our fellow bowlers. Could a Miniature Golf outing be next?

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Hatches Matches & Dispatches

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Fox Rothschild Bowling Outing

Karen Hooyer (Robert T. Corcoran, P.C.) reports that she retired effective Friday, January 16, and is moving permanently to Manchester, NJ. She bought the house over 2 years ago and has been using the time to do renovations. She says it has been a wonderful experience belonging to the NJ ALA and wishes everyone a long and healthy future. She also says "Who knows, if I get too bored, I may start looking for a part time job down there!"

Members were asked about a hero in their life. ***Fran Puntillo (Weiner Lesniak)*** *was happy to respond…read and you will see why….*

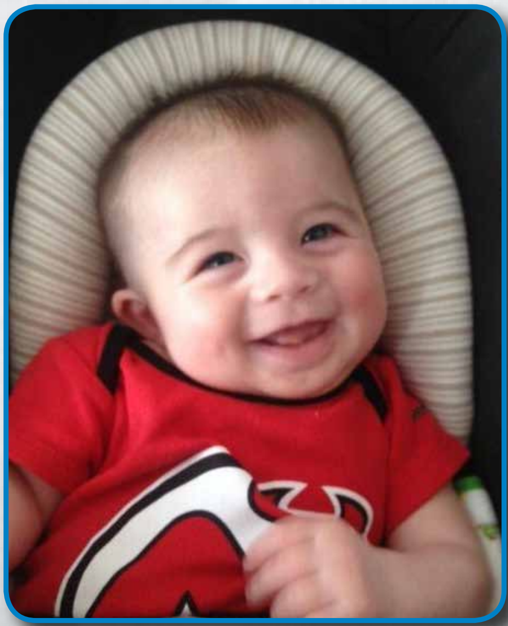
"Hero... when you say that word, most people picture an old(er) man or woman who has achieved greatness over his/her lifetime. My Hero is a little different. My Hero comes in a relatively small package, is a man of very few words, and hasn't impacted many lives as yet. I think it's a safe bet that my Hero hasn't changed anyone's world as dramatically as he's changed mine. So I'll claim him as my own personal Hero.

My Hero's special gift is his uncanny ability to remind me of a time before I allowed work and other pressures to cloud my outlook on life ... when almost everything was new and exciting... when even the simplest things are just wonderful to behold... when it didn't take lots of money or even lots of time to find something new and profound in everyday life!

My hero requires very little to be content with the situation he wakes up and finds himself in every day. That's trust and acceptance. He taught me that I should live in and, most importantly, enjoy the moment. Without uttering a single word, he showed me that sitting together in my task chair and sliding and spinning around in my about-to-be renovated, uncarpeted room is much more fun than stressing over color, texture, and the cost of new carpeting.

He has shown me that just setting goals isn't enough. He inspires me by demonstrating that you must work hard to achieve your goals. My Hero loves his toes, and although he finds them hard to reach, with time, effort and practice ... he can now get his toes into his mouth. But he hasn't stopped with that success; he sets new goals for himself every day. He shows me that everything is attainable if you're willing to put in the time and the effort and practice, practice, practice. And yes, he has shown me that sometimes reaching for goals hurts. One should set reasonable goals, he advises. And he demonstrates that it's OK to be proud of yourself when you succeed. You should see his smile when he rolls over. But I know my Hero won't stop there... he'll soon be crawling... and then walking. He demonstrates that every day is not just an opportunity but an invitation to grow, both physically and spiritually. My Hero has the most beautiful, expressive blue eyes I've ever seen. And when he smiles at me, I'm happy and the things I've allowed to clutter my life and stress me out just melt away. He's so Zen ~ my perfect Muse!

I'm sure you've figured out by now that my Hero is Boo, my grandson who was born on Halloween last year. Boo's given name is Martin, but he and I made a special pact ~ I can call him Boo and he can call me anytime!



Boo

After asking the question with regard to a hero in your life, my thought goes to my mother, who we lost over 15 years ago. Her greatest pride and joy was family, whom she always put first. I see her personality in both of my children; they are very caring, hard-working, compassionate individuals who will extend a helping hand to ease burden on others, take time to listen, or give you a "hug" just because. My mother would be so proud of the adults they have become. For that reason, my hero is my "mom."—Cindy

Cindy Landis is the Office Administrator of Gennet Kallmann Antin & Robinson in Parsippany.

What's on Tap

ALA and NJALA 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday July 2, 2015

ALA Webinar: The Paperless Office – You Can Do It! Contact Peggy Siems, ALA Headquarters for more information.

Wednesday July 15, 2015

ALA Webinar: Creating Proactive Leadership. Contact Peggy Siems, ALA Headquarters for more information.

Thursday August 6, 2015

ALA Webinar: Keys to Interpreting Benchmarking Information to Drive Performance Improvement. Contact Peggy Siems, ALA Headquarters for more information.

August 6-8, 2015

ALA Large Firm Principal Administrators Retreat. Colorado Springs, CO.

Wednesday August 19, 2015

ALA Webinar: De-Mystifying Data Breaches and Information Security Compliance. Contact Peggy Siems, ALA Headquarters for more information.

Thursday September 3, 2015

ALA Webinar: The Right Person For the Right Job. Contact Peggy Siems, ALA Headquarters for more information.

Wednesday September 16, 2015

Business Partner Expo, Mayfair Farms, 6-8 pm. Educational session starts at 4:30 pm.

For information about:

Monthly meetings – : Please contact Doreen Marino of Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP at 908-518-6457.

Educational Workshops – Please contact Nancy Harris, of Gordon Rees at 973-549-2500.

NJALA Socials – Please contact Judy Sotardi of Forman Holt Eliades & Youngman, LLC at 201-845-1000, ext. 376.

ALA Webinars: Registration and general information is posted on the ALA site, www.alanet.org/education/regconf/telesem.html.

Employee Empowerment

By Michelle Cohen

There is not one doubt in my mind that *in theory* all of us want to be the best manager we can possibly be. Most of us go into our work places hoping we not only get the myriad of monumental tasks we are responsible for accomplished, but also that we put our own special mark on the work that we do. We want to be acknowledged for having done exemplary work, don't we? We want our Managing Partners (and hey, our co-workers too!) to know we are brilliant, insightful, creative, reliable, hard-working employees that are essential to the success of our respective firms, correct? We want to be recognized, appreciated, and entrusted with even greater tasks going forward to reward us for having done such a fantastic job. Now take a step back and acknowledge that **every single one** of our employees that we manage/supervise/work with & for every day feels EXACTLY the same way that we do.

I know, I know—this is all "common sense" stuff, but well-meaning as we may be, it is a LOT more difficult to actually "walk the walk" than just "talk the talk"! While researching this article there were many "aha" moments when guilt and denial seeped into my mind when I recognized an empowering opportunity being described and realized I myself had missed that particular opportunity in whatever instance I was recalling. Ouch. Instead of being so tough on ourselves, it would be lovely if we could embrace the concept that, in general, the research supports that if we empower our employees they will be happier, they will work more productively, and our businesses will be enhanced from all the positive effects this ripple will create. Of course, we all know theory to practice is not an easy road, but if we try to start small and embrace one new concept at a time and try it on for size, we may all be surprised how nice the positive effects are and how thoroughly worth it this approach can be.

So, let's talk turkey! How on Earth do we manage to do this? What does employee empowerment really mean? Empowerment for employees means to delegate more responsibility and authority, to let employees make decisions on how something is to be done—taking ownership for it so to speak. To truly empower your employees you need to show them that you trust them. You also need to give them the freedom that is necessary to do their jobs so you are also giving them an opportunity to develop new skills. Additionally, you need to provide them with all the necessary resources and information in order to be successful at whatever they are doing. You are also affording them the opportunity to fail or make mistakes. Now imagine you provide all of this to the employee and are not hovering, micro-managing, controlling, organizing, prioritizing, or decision making during the process. It is that fine line between being a good manager and also being a great leader. This is not easy stuff folks!

There is fear and concern on both sides of this fence—you and the employee are both worried. You worry the employee won't do the work "right" or "on time" or in the way in which you secretly feel it should be done. You don't want to relinquish full control (how many times have we said "it is just easier if I do it myself; it takes too long to go through the whole thing to have so-and-so do it", etc.). You also have to accept the hit to your ego that this person may actually do it even better than you—they may have great ideas, or they may have a totally different process. Your way is not always the best, and you just empowered your employee to make decisions, do something on their own, and feel pretty darn good about it.

From the employee standpoint there is fear that they may screw it up, look bad, or fail. Maybe they are resentful because they perceive you are "dumping" a project on them that is "YOUR" work. Maybe they feel overwhelmed with their workload or unsupported in their position. Perhaps they don't feel appreciated in general or don't look at this as a great opportunity to showcase their A-game. Regardless, they have just as much concern as you do. The point is that in empowering your employees these type of issues arise and they will need to be addressed and dissected. How nice to strive for a more transparent workplace with a little more open communication! Again, this is not supposed to be seamless or particularly easy, which is why so many managers shy away from this approach. It seems easier to let things remain as they are.

The research suggests that you need to at least consider

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Employee Empowerment

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some of the following things you can do to empower folks. Just think about it and see if any of these strike a chord in you. The effects that this can have long-term are really astounding. Employees will want to stay at their jobs longer. They will become more invested in their work and have a higher rate of job satisfaction. Guess what? You will too because all of this trickles up and down the proverbial ladders.

Empowerment Steps

If you have read this far I am hopeful you will at least take a peek at some opportunities for you and your employees—simple steps/approaches that create employee empowerment. I am paraphrasing (and adding my own unique verbiage!) several of the quoted sources at the end of this article for this list. There are plenty of resources and guides out there if you are interested in trying this approach in your workplace:

- **Give the power.** What this means is, you HAVE to allow the employee to have decision-making power! This is tough, extra tough for those of us who are tightly wound Type-A personality over-achievers. The more input the employee has, the more invested he or she becomes and the better the results will be.
- **Provide resources.** You need to direct your employees, give them resources, places to research, or whatever they need so they can be as successful as possible at what they are doing. Don't dump and run—help them to learn.
- **No smothering.** This is very hard to do but you have to allow the employee the respect of being independent. That doesn't mean you are not part of the team, but they need to come up with the ideas (yes, you can help but not lead). The employee is guiding the time tables or whatever it is they are needing to do. Be supportive but let them know you trust them with this and they are doing great.
- **Give 100% responsibility.** Allow your employee to own the task or job or project. Also allow them to own entirely the results and every part of the process.
- **Pick the right project/work for the employee.** When empowering employees, make sure you are giving the right work to the right people. Make sure they have the right skills (if not, you have to give them training, etc.) Additionally, you must give employees as much information as possible about the job/project so they can make independent, intelligent, informed decisions. Make sure they have the "big picture" and understand the expectations.
- **Do give a deadline and check-in.** While micromanaging clearly is not empowering, it is only fair and decent to set a parameter for guidance (i.e., deadline) and also to check in periodically to be aware of what is going on. You are not looking to abandon your employee—you want to empower them.

Management Qualities

While you are considering the above list of items, also factor in the following important pieces that we as managers need to include in order to fully empower our employees:

- **TRUST.** That is easier said than done. Reinforce their contributions. Encourage their independence. Trust they will do the right thing. Do not limit their tools or information. Let them focus on accomplishing, not worrying and second-guessing. When employees receive clear expectations and trust from their managers they in turn trust you back.
- **VALUE.** Show your employees that you value them. Your actions and your words are absolutely being watched more closely than you may realize—your body language, your tone, your expressions. Make sure the employee knows that you appreciate them for their unique value and contribution (no matter how they are performing on the task at hand). Everyone wants to be valued as a human being and nobody should ever feel invisible.
- **SHARE VISION.** You have a leadership vision, I just know you do! Well, then share it! People want to be part of something BIGGER. We know this, it has been researched and documented. Make sure your employees know the firm's strategic plan, vision, mission, etc. Make sure you know it too! If possible, include employees in any planning, where appropriate, or at least ask for their input. They may feel like they are in the trenches and that they should be asked first about things. Often decisions are made without this consideration in mind.
- **SHARE GOALS.** Involve your employees, where possible, on department level goal setting. Share the most important goals and direction with your group at the very least. Have your employees help you to determine measureable goals and OBSERVEABLE GOALS. Sharing a picture of your team/firm goals and including the employees to be a part of that as a team empowers everyone.
- **SHARE INFORMATION.** This is self-explanatory. Give your employees the information and tools they need in order to be successful. Remember that old story of the sister that always left one ingredient out of the pie recipe so that nobody else in the family could make the pie as great as her? Don't be that person!
- **DELEGATE THE RIGHT STUFF.** Don't just delegate work—delegate authority. Delegate opportunities. Delegate the important meetings, the committee membership. Let your employee get noticed, let them grow and learn new skills. It is really a reflection of how good you are as a manager!
- **FEEDBACK.** Provide it frequently—be constructive, honest and make sure it is does not include what YOU

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Employee Empowerment

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think should be done. If this comes up you need to start asking questions: What do YOU think should happen next? How can this be changed to improve the outcome? Turn questions back to your employee to empower them to make the decisions.

- **LISTEN AND ASK.** Be there to listen but also use questions as a way to help support and guide employees to making their own decisions. This teaches them that you trust their judgment. Do you have that one employee that comes to you for every little thing, needing permission to do something they have done a million times?? This is the beginning of ending that cycle. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by trying it out. Also the employee will be gaining so much in self-confidence so it is a win-win!
- **LOOK AT PROBLEMS THE RIGHT WAY.** When issues arise, look at the work system, not at the person, to help determine what is going wrong. Often it is the breakdown in the system that causes failure, not the people. Sometimes it IS the people, but don't be so quick to place blame. Try to look at the big picture and evaluate and go through a process to determine what went wrong and how to address fixing it.
- **REWARD AND RECOGNIZE!** Employees have that basic need to be acknowledged for their efforts (especially extra efforts). When they feel under-compensated, under-appreciated, under-titled, under-noticed, and under-praised it just doesn't fare well for thinking they could ever be empowered at their jobs. They need your recognition—it carries a lot of weight.

There is a lot of information here—none of it nearly in-depth enough, but hopefully it gave a small spark of interest for you to consider doing more research and implementing small changes at your current workplace. As a general summation, in order to get empowered employees, remember to make sure they care about what you care about. <u>Think about it in terms of a sports team where all the players have a common goal but each play a unique but important part.</u> Additionally, foster open communication with your team, reward self-improvement, provide plenty of context and clearly define all roles. Require accountability and support, support, support! When it is all said and done make sure you appreciate their efforts. While it is true people work to get money that they need to live, there are many people at your place of work that are not just there for the money. Empowered people need a greater level of satisfaction than just financial stability. Just be open about saying thank you for a job well done and celebrate the things your team does right.

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What Would You Do?

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"Often a conversation with the secretary is needed. Are the problems circumstantial or consistent/ongoing behavior that he/she cannot deal with? Is the secretary serious about walking out or do they need a place to release frustration? Depending on my relationship with that partner (most here are willing to listen to HR), I might speak to them directly and gently inquire about the situation. Additionally, my next question would be, 'Are you ok with losing your secretary?' Many times they don't realize how they're affecting others."

"I would have no recourse but to address the problem with the partner and pray that I still have a job afterwards."

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Where All The Heroes?

By Doreen Marino, PHR, SHRM-CP

"True Heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost."—Arthur Ashe

Thank you, Mr. Ashe. I couldn't have said it better myself. We typically associate a hero as someone who consistently stands out in the crowd, the Superman, the one who saves, the one who withstands all obstacles, and endures all pain. That hero is a fantasy. That hero is a noun. The hero of today is a verb. One who does; one who fixes; one who helps; one who serves; one who gives freely; and one who inspires others to do the same. Now you don't need all of these qualities to be a hero. I say any one of these characteristics can result in a form of heroism.

Who needs a hero? You do. Everyone does at one time or another. Every time you think "who will…" you are looking for a hero.

- Who will bring in another client, business is slow?
- Who will handle this emergency filing?
- Who is going to help me fix this problem?
- Who is going to stay late tonight to get this done?

We tend to focus on the negative, the bad employee, the "*everything is wrong with the firm"* employee, the ones who are in it for the paycheck and nothing else. They exhaust you and they make you think you made a wrong career choice. They suck up all your energy and make you start counting the days to retirement. You might not be able to squash them, but you can quash them by supporting the heroes. Tell heroes that they are heroes; tell them they saved the day; tell them how essential they are to the success of the day. All those positive thinking writers are not wrong. Heroes can be infectious and inspire more heroism. After all, everyone has the ability to be a hero.

Several months ago I had an issue that required a large amount of staff to assist in an immediate project. I sent the staff an email and I copied the attorneys so they were aware that this was a problem in the firm that required immediate attention. To my surprise, many **attorneys** responded with the offer to help out with the project. My heroes.

Given this definition of a hero, and considering the entire staff of every firm serves the attorneys (and the success of the business) every day, and the attorneys dedicate themselves to the success of the business every day, there are many acts of heroism occurring right under your nose.

Some other examples of Heroes? Take a look at the list of the NJALA Past Presidents. They are sought out regularly for guidance, continue to help and support the Board of Trustees and are always willing to lend a hand. They jokingly call themselves "has beens." Has been a hero, of course.

Finally, the hardest question of all. Are you a hero? If you are qualified to be a member, then you love *the urge to serve others at whatever cost*. Because, that is what we do—serve the attorneys, serve the staff, find that happy balance between the two, and support the success of the firm. So, Superman, who are your heroes?

Doreen Marino is the Director of Human Resources for Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP, in Westfield.

Nine Essential Billing and Collection Skills For Lawyers

By Joel A. Rose

In creating and managing a law firm's money pot, consider the following: What mix of ingredients will help the firm's lawyers successfully bill and collect? How about money as a factor? This ingredient is an important part of the mixture. You must also throw in peer recognition and evaluation. Most lawyers want the added spice that comes from working in a firm that knows its priorities and values. Add these ingredients in the right proportions and your billings and collections will flourish.

Motivation Essential

Lawyers will flourish because they want to succeed, but your firm's culture must stimulate their motivation to succeed. Take away motivation and your billings and collections will suffer. The key is self-motivation, which is the fuel that drives most lawyers to succeed. Firm management should function primarily to protect and encourage each lawyer's self-direction. Managers should interfere only in exceptional circumstances.

How do you foster this sense of personal responsibility? The best way is to encourage your lawyers to know and understand what contributions they make to billings, chargeable hours, client development, outside activities and firm public relations.

Negative Success Factors

Lawyers become better team players when they can control and influence firm policies that affect their professional, personal and economic success. They see their success as an integral part of their firm's success. Successful firms work hard to develop their success factors. These success factors are intangible and difficult to quantify, but when they are missing it is easy to identify their symptoms. Success factors are like good health, hard to describe — but get sick and the symptoms become your medical diagnosis.

Diagnose a sick firm culture and you will find 10 symptoms: poor productivity; lawyers who fail to bill and collect; high personnel turnover; hostility between individuals; low morale; out of control overhead; lawyers unwilling to change or consider new practice ideas; lack of initiative or creativity; apathy; and the inability of management to gain support for its decisions.

These symptoms, left unchecked, will destroy the self-motivation and productivity of any firm's lawyers and staff — and eventually the firm.

Contrast these symptoms with those found in firms that work hard to build and maintain a team approach to practice. The five symptoms of healthy firms are effective communications; heightened self-motivation; increased productivity and commitment to billings and collections; low stress; and fewer sick days and other absences.

Nine Essential Billing and Collection Skills

Motivation is essential to drive a lawyer's commitment to bill and collect. But, without the proper skills this commitment can lie idle. Billing and collecting is a skill and not a talent. What are the skills your lawyers must learn?

First, allow your young lawyers to bill small matters early in their careers. Make sure these young lawyers have mentors to turn to for billing and collection questions and discussions. A good young biller and collector will be a good old biller and collector.

Second, do not try to turn every lawyer into a biller and collector. Some lawyers can't do this work or they don't want to learn. I have seen lawyers who freeze when it comes time to bill and collect. Know who these lawyers are in your firm and give their billing and collection tasks to someone else. Make your good billers, young or old, responsible for billing your major clients. Remove billing responsibility from lawyers who are reluctant or refuse to send out timely bills. A manager who detects an inability in a young lawyer to bill should act quickly to find the cause. Without proper training, young lawyers retain bad billing habits to the end of their legal careers. It takes training to develop good billers and collectors.

Third, every firm should set sensible written billing policies and procedures. Regularly bill every possible transaction, for example, monthly. Most midlevel managers have a limit on the amount of a supplier's invoice they can authorize for payment. Know the amount, because if your monthly is under the threshold it will get paid. Some firms consider it good practice to bill a transactional matter-in-progress before closing, especially one that takes many months to complete.

Fourth, if you want to turn receivables into cash, follow-up is essential. Send a new statement when the first one is more than 30 days old and further follow-up letters at 60 and 90 days. At the end of 90 days, remove the account from the billing lawyer

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Nine Essential Billing and Collection Skills for Lawyers

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turn it over to someone else for collection. Billing lawyers are reluctant to aggressively pursue their slow paying clients. If a client tenders a reasonable partial payment on an old account, take it and run. Law firms spend too much time pursuing deadbeats. Lawyers forget "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" when they go to collect their own accounts.

Fifth, make sure your bills describe your services. A client who can easily understand the work you did is likely to find your fee acceptable and pay promptly. Most computer programs allow you to enter the details clients want on their accounts. Make sure you have such a program, because without it you need to spend more time editing your draft accounts. These new programs eliminate the old excuse "not enough time to bill." In many well-managed firms, secretaries input time and service descriptions into their personal firm computer. This practice reduces errors because secretaries know their bosses' files better than someone in accounting. Also, secretaries are better able to pick up on errors when lawyers make dictated time records. This practice will streamline your billing process.

Sixth, remember that effective collections require timely billing. The sooner you send your bill after completing client work, the faster the client will pay. Different types of cases require different billing strategies. Bill transactional matters at or before closing because clients quickly reinvest the proceeds of many closings. Bill your litigation files at least monthly. Some firms now bill on a continuous monthly billing cycle. It is considered a poor practice to wait until the end of the month to bill all matters.

Seventh, ask for cash retainers. Cash retainers are essential when you deal with an out-of-state or small local company. Some firms are experimenting with refundable advance retainers. These firms refund this type of retainer at the end of a matter, provided the client has paid all outstanding bills and expenses. It is odd how some clients expect you to defend or prosecute a "great case" but are unwilling to advance you $2,000. Are you not better off without these non-advancing clients?

Eighth, let clients pay all larger disbursements directly to outside suppliers. Wise lawyers know that outstanding disbursements are merely interest-free loans to clients.

Finally, use financial reports to help stimulate better billing and collections habits. All partners and their associates should receive each other's work-in-progress and aged accounts receivable lists. Your managing partner or director of administration should review these reports with lawyers who are behind in their billings and collections. But the publication and circulation of these reports is the most effective way to prod lawyers into action. You should not overlook the power of "the fear of a sneer from a peer."

Aggressive Billing and Collection

Don't give up if your firm's culture does not support and stimulate a team approach. Instead, use one or more of these seven aggressive collection options.

- Hold monthly Saturday billing meetings.
- Withhold the draws of partners who do not meet their billing obligations.
- Charge clients interest for late payments, using appropriate truth in lending forms signed by clients.
- Insist on advance cash retainers.
- Bill weekly.
- Sue deadbeat clients.
- Have the managing partner, an executive committee member or the marketing committee approve the acceptance of new clients or work.

Execute these practices in a firm culture where team play and individual responsibility reign and you will have cash, not work-in-progress and receivables.

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Build a Sustainability Program for Your Firm in Four Easy Steps

By Jim Weber, All State Legal

With Earth Day 2015 behind us, it's easy to set aside the environmental practices that were highlighted and focused on leading up to and celebrated on Earth Day, as we become absorbed in all the projects and deadlines that are at the center of everyday business life. However, many law firms are discovering that "being green" is no longer optional or a fleeting interest, but rather a way of doing business that can improve the firm's standing in the local community, and add dollars to its bottom line.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, something is sustainable if it is "able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed; involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources; able to last or continue for a long time." This last point is the touchstone of any successful law firm sustainability program.

Below are four easy steps that provide you with a game plan for creating and implementing a successful sustainability program for your firm.

Step 1: Effective Internal Communications

At the heart of any successful sustainability program is an effective internal communication plan. To ensure successful adoption and implementation, your program must engage employees from the outset.

The first part of this is to effectively communicate your firm's sustainability goals and why they are important for your firm, for each individual employee and for your local community.

To get this started, you should create a sustainability committee and appoint a leader. Then you can recruit, assign, or ask for volunteers for the committee. When doing so, be sure to include a teaser about the goals of the committee and how they affect the firm's overall goals, the expected amount of time and type of work committee members can expect, and the incremental compensation, if any, that the committee members will enjoy (remember, compensation does not necessarily need to be monetary, but can come in many forms such as firm-wide recognition, a committee notation on business cards and email signatures, or even additional time off. Be creative to entice your most creative employees to join).

The next step is to clearly share with employees how they can participate. While employees who value sustainability practices will sign on for any program and will lead the way for participation, it is important that all employees understand how they can take part in the program.

Lastly, this cannot be a "one and done" communication. A regular and continuous communication plan should be developed and should include milestones and a progress toward achieving stated goals—both for the campaign itself and for the firm.

Step 2: Easy and Fun Campaigns

To gain optimum participation, the individual campaigns you implement as part of your sustainability program must be both easy to join and to participate in. They must also be fun. Here are some ideas for keeping the campaigns fun:

- Try to spark competitive spirit. For example, if you are running a recycling program, pit practice areas against each other. Or raise the bar and pit attorneys against support staff.
- Use social media. For example, create a sustainability idea-share hashtag for your employees. This will not only allow all employees to voice opinions and ideas, but it will also enable your clients and followers to see the real-life commitment to your sustainability program.
- Participate in local events outside the firm to gain momentum for the campaign. For example, if your community is running a sustainability campaign (e.g., bike to work, community clean up, tree planting), get involved and get your employees involved.

Campaigns can be ongoing or event-based, but are typically created around travel, energy, printing, recycling, or giving back.

Step 3: Effective External Communications

Once you have a sustainability program in place, you need to get the word out beyond the walls of your firm. Today, more clients and potential clients make business choices based on the sustainability and environmental practices of potential

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Build a Sustainability Program for Your Firm in 4 Easy Steps
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partners. Be sure to include a sustainability statement page on your website. You can also post regular updates to your social media sites and blogs.

Just as with internal communications, you must continue to spread the word about your overall sustainability program, the campaigns you've run and will be running, as well as the benefits of these programs.

Step 4: Real, Ongoing Commitment

While many firms focus on what employees can do to support their sustainability programs, don't forget to show your own support by making investments and improvements that will have a positive impact on the environment. For example, purchasing Energy Star-rated electronics, shutting down computers at night, and upgrading lighting can all reduce energy usage and increase cost savings. Even something as small as installing motion lighting in areas that are less frequently used throughout the day (e.g., kitchens or restrooms) can reduce the amount of energy your firm is consuming.

Make your sustainability program an ongoing part of your business by setting clear business goals to reduce costs and waste and gain efficiency and by creating a well-defined communication plan.

Creating a sustainability program to conserve resources can save your firm money and bolster your firm's business development efforts, while also helping to preserve natural resources. Many firms with sustainability programs reap the benefits of a more loyal and fulfilled employee base, increased firm revenues, and decreased costs.

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NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS OF NJALA

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What Do Clients Want?

By Jim Jarrell and Greg Deatz

What? You don't know? Well, we're sorry to say, there is no secret sauce, no special recipe, no magic button for satisfying your clients' needs. Every client has a different set of goals and a different set of needs, and it is up to us to figure it out.

Short of specifically asking clients what they want (which isn't the worst idea in the world), what are some of the ways we can glean this information for ourselves and ascertain clients' desires and needs? Specifically, we'll lay out some suggestions for getting to the root of a client's wants by reading, listening (and responding), and monitoring business intelligence. It may sound trite, but this is client development at its simplest and most elegant: If, in addition to delivering excellent results, you understand what is going on in your client's world, and you demonstrate an awareness and interest in their business, you will build trust and faith, and your relationship will stay strong through all times, both fat and lean.

But first, before we go any further, you should recognize that your firm's clients have hired your attorneys for a reason: They trust them, they value their experience, knowledge and skills, and they have a personal connection that goes beyond simple "lawyering." What follows in this article is not a mechanism to convince clients who are already leaving to stay, nor will it convince disengaged prospects to magically offer their money. It is rather a toolkit to help you keep your attorneys focused on the things that matter to their clients and prospects.

So, how does reading, listening, and monitoring business intelligence keep your attorneys focused? First, let's start with reading.

Reading

Depending on your clients or prospective clients, you will have a trove of documents you can read that will help you better understand what they need:

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

The most obvious place to start is the with your client's RFP. An RFP is an articulation of your client's most basic needs; hourly rates, billing frequency, willingness to pay for various expenses, expression of legal needs, etc. Rather than dropping in boilerplate answers in the response, you may be better served by carefully studying *exactly* what your client is asking for, and then tailoring your response to address those needs in a more compelling way.

While it seems obvious to read the RFP when you are trying to win the client, it may not seem obvious to periodically refer back to it. It is quite possible, even likely, that you won your client by accommodating *most* of the requirements in an RFP, but not necessarily all. What better way to communicate a desire to keep the relationship strong than to revisit items in their RFP, anticipate areas for improvement, and then proactively address them with your client?

Billing Guidelines

Like an RFP—though with greater detail—your client's billing guidelines outline their expectations for doing business with them; reimbursements of expenses, wording of billing entries, handling of file-related travel, and the like. If you are anything like me, you have seen countless bills returned or marked down by clients because the attorney neglected to follow a simple billing guidelines such as "file-related travel of less than 25 miles from the attorney's office will not be reimbursed."

Work with your attorneys and your billing departments to seek billing guideline nirvana and shoot for every bill to be perfect and impossible to challenge. You may never get to 100% realization, but ignoring even the smallest details in your client's billing guidelines may, at best, annoy them, and at worst, give them pause to reconsider the engagement.

Websites, News, Financials

Read your clients' websites, news, and their financial reports (if they are public). A careful read of websites, news, and financials will help identify a hot sale (indicating a push for revenue), a change in leadership, the introduction of a new product, or a developing risk: Perhaps your client is a web services firm, and they are experiencing an outage, or perhaps a client's income statement or balance sheet hints at coming challenges. In all of these cases, your attorney has an opportunity to further cement her relationship with her client by placing a phone call and demonstrating interest.

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What Do Clients Want?

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Listening and Responding

All of the above ideas relating to *reading* ultimately create opportunities to communicate with your clients outside the context of a specific case, where you're *not* billing them time. While communicating isn't specifically listening, the whole point of communicating with your clients is to further listen to their needs. If your client is facing financial trouble, you may be in a great position to offer a flat fee program that helps control costs and keep value high. If your client is facing a significant risk and you are in front of the risk, you maintain your role (or establish it) as a trusted advisor and you may open opportunities for cross-selling your firm.

Aside from reading, there are other mechanisms to create listening opportunities.

Professional Development and CLE

Pay attention to the CLE programming offered by professional organizations for in-house attorneys (e.g., ACC and CCCA). The programs they are offering generally reflect the demand from their audience, based on research they've done to address the needs of in-house lawyers. Private CLE providers do similar research to ensure they have high enrollment. If they've already done the hard work to identify what programming needs exist, review their offerings and determine what you and your firm may able to provide to your clients and offer it to them, free of charge.

Charities

Clients are often heavily involved in charities, and they will ask you to donate and/or participate in their charitable endeavors. You should always participate. Participation demonstrates a stronger interest than a simple donation, and it creates an opportunity be with your client in a social setting where you can… Listen. Go figure.

Business Intelligence

Reading and listening are a form of paying direct attention to your clients. Equally important, however, you need to watch what your competitors are doing. If you are not paying attention to your competition, your attorney may think that he is doing a remarkable job paying attention to his client, but the competition could potentially scoop him on issues related to price, service, or results.

It is also critical to keep an eye on growing trends in the marketplace beyond your traditional law firm competition. The market for what law firms sell, how, and at what price has definitely gone tepid. That said, there is a growing segment of competition (LPOs, temp lawyers, software) that is doing great. You need to figure out what they're doing, how they are offering it and at what price, and what is exciting your clients and getting their business? Find out fast, and start responding to it.

So how do you do that, you ask? Business intelligence can be gathered from many sources—including public records, publications, the Internet, surveys, and personal interviews—and many of them can be leveraged in several ways.

Public Records

Lexis and West are two companies with robust, comprehensive tools for monitoring court filings, which can be helpful for a number of reasons. Monitoring court filings can help you respond to your clients' needs even before they know they need them. From a research perspective, reviewing past litigation history can give you insight into where your clients have the greatest legal service needs, and which competitor firms they have used to fill those needs. Knowing specifically who you may be up against is valuable intelligence that can help you differentiate and win any new work.

Don't get overly focused on court records, though, that you forget other public regulators. The SEC and USPTO also have vast searchable public records databases that can be useful in your business intelligence gathering.

Publications

See *Reading* above. More to the point, sophisticated publications have dual platforms with online searchability, so you can research historic coverage of your client and see how they've been covered by various news and industry publications. Editorial content written about your client can also provide valuable insight into how they are viewed in the public eye, which can open the opportunity for you to help them shape or change the conversation.

Internet

It may seem elementary, but the easiest way to find even the most basic information about your clients is to do an internet search. Google Alerts is a perfect example of a totally passive way for you to mine the internet for searchable business intelligence about your clients. It's not always going to be useful, but once in a while, you'll stumble across something that turns into a game-changer.

Surveys and Personal Interviews

This is a segment of business intelligence that often gets ignored by law firms because (depending on how you do it) it can be quite costly to engage in a meaningful way. There are scores of consultants and business intelligence firms that can be hired to conduct client feedback interviews and collect and analyze surveys.

But there's nothing stopping you from doing it yourself on a much smaller scale. Anonymous surveys (especially online surveys), when sent out in batches, can yield tremendous response results with feedback and insight that may be more valuable than if you sat opposite the client in person and asked

(Continued on page 24)

What Do Clients Want?

(Continued from page 23)

them personally—because the anonymity gives them cover to be honest.

Conclusion

Ultimately, there is no goose that will deliver you your golden egg. You need to keep up with your client—better yet, you need to stay *ahead* of your client, delivering value as a trusted advisor and valued friend. Reading, listening and responding, and keeping up with business intelligence are just three ways to make sure you understand what your client wants.

Greg Deatz is the Chief Operating Officer for Stark & Stark, A Professional Corporation, a 105-attorney general practice firm specializing in people and their businesses. From birth injuries to estate planning, business creation to business dissolution, Stark & Stark helps people and their businesses solve problems. Greg has been a member of the New Jersey ALA since 2005. Link with him on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/gregorydeatz).

Jim Jarrell is the Director of Marketing & Practice Development for Stark & Stark, A Professional Corporation. Jim recently moved to New Jersey from Chicago where he was the Business Development Manager for Barnes & Thornburg LLP's Litigation Department. Follow him on Twitter (@JimJarrell) and LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/jamesjarrell).

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THE ABC'S OF LEGAL MANAGEMENT

BY ELYSSA GOLDSTEIN

Below is the irrefutable, indisputable list of character traits, skills, and mastery one must possess in order to be considered the perfect legal manager. Until now, there was no such list. This article is largely meant to be a work of satire. Or is it?

Attention to detail—For example, remembering that Alice likes ice cream cake for her birthday, Ames is on a diet and wants fruit salad instead of cake for his birthday, and Alistair is celebrating a milestone birthday this year and does not want it acknowledged in any way.

Balance—Be prepared to juggle the roles of receptionist, secretary, accountant, housekeeper, disciplinarian, and therapist, among others, within a typical work week. Be prepared to juggle. You never know when you will be called on.

Camaraderie—Your job is to foster camaraderie amongst your colleagues and subordinates, which can be hard to do as you are also their supervisor.

Decision-making—You will often be tasked with making decisions, some of which may negatively impact others, but will be best for the office/firm as a whole. Always pick "C."

Eagerness—Show enthusiasm (Bonus word!) for every assignment you are given, no matter how small. Yes, you should be enthusiastic about loading the dishwasher or changing the bottle for the water cooler. *[Or unplugging the toilet—editor].*

Frugality—Operating under a strict budget is good for everyone—you make your managing partner look good and everyone benefits.

Gumption—Demand respect. Command respect. Do it for Aretha (who, by the way, prefers the traditional yellow cake and chocolate frosting combination on her birthday).

Humor—Laugh to ease the tension in a meeting, stop the tears alone in a bathroom stall, or calm the crazy client menacingly laughing back at you and refusing to leave the premises.

Intuition—Know what your supervisor wants before he/she even asks. Have a back-up plan in case you first instinct fails.

Judicial—Legal pun! Possess the ability to accurately assess job candidates and make good hires. Talk your boss out of a bad hire if need be.

Kindness—You get better returns out of being nice than you do out of being nasty. Remember that this job helps keep a roof over the head of you, your immediate family members, and Cousin Morris who was only supposed to visit for four days three months ago.

Loyalty—Be loyal to your employer. They deserve it no matter how hard your job is.

Morality—Don't compromise your beliefs. If a colleague asks you to do something that is questionable, don't do it, no matter how tempting.

Nimble—Be light on your feet to dodge any objects thrown at you by disgruntled co-workers.

Orator—Feel comfortable speaking in front of others (and speaking your mind when necessary, for that matter). In the digital age, we tend to forget how much value is placed on someone who is well-spoken.

Pride—Be proud of your legal manager title and its importance to your office/firm. It takes a tough nut (emphasis on nut) to do what we do day in and day out and the prouder you are of your professional accomplishments, the prouder your supervisor will be of you and your professional accomplishments, as well.

Question—Don't be afraid to inquire. Don't be afraid to ask for directions to be repeated and/or reworded. If your boss scares you, listen closely the first time and take good notes.

Reliable—Show up on time every single day. Invest in a trustworthy alarm clock. Meet deadlines and communicate if you need a deadline extended. Be a man or woman of your word.

Studious—Pick up a book every once in a while. Read a newspaper. Go rogue and subscribe to an industry-specific blog. Attend a conference or obtain a professional certification.

Talent—Use other hobbies or unique experiences to enhance your work life. You'll never know when your one semester of watercolor painting taken at the local YMCA in the summer of 1993 will come in handy.

Understanding—You will come across colleagues who do not have your skill set, or colleagues with difficult personal lives. Lend your knowledge and show compassion.

Volunteer—Be the first in line. Raise your hand. Do more than simply make the Jell-O mold for the office/firm's annual Thanksgiving luncheon. In short, if you want to be a leader, lead.

Well-rested—Make sure you get your eight hours because you will inevitably feel like you competed in a decathlon at the end of every day.

Xenodochial—Cheers to a character trait beginning with the letter "x"! (Look it up!)

Yearn—Desire to be the best, produce results, and improve the quality of your organization.

Zest—See "eagerness" above and you'll get the general point of this bullet and this alphabetical masterpiece as a whole. Our job is hard! But it is well worth it in the end.

Elyssa Goldstein is the Office Manager of Donahue, Hagan, Klein & Weisberg, LLC in Morristown.

Barbara Fisher, ALA Regional Representative

By Fran Puntillo, CLM

In this edition, I have the pleasure of introducing you to Barbara Fisher, ALA's Region 1 Representative. I met Barbara a few years ago at an ALA conference. After sharing a cocktail with her at the end of a busy day of educational sessions, I felt as if I had known her for years! You may have met Barbara last month when she visited our chapter and attended our meeting at the Highlawn Pavilion. In case you didn't have the opportunity to speak with her that evening, here are some bits of information about her I'd like to share.

Barbara was born in Price George, British Columbia, Canada. She currently resides in Ottawa with her friend and a miniature Schnauzer (Sookie). Barbara has one daughter who has a degree in Fine Arts with theatre design as a specialty. Barbara graduated with a Registered Nursing degree, but moved into the legal field more than 25 years ago when the opportunity presented itself.

Barbara's desire to care for people transitioned smoothly from the medical field to all aspects of her professional and personal life. Today, she is the Director of Administration at Merovitz Potechen, a firm of 12 attorneys with practice areas in commercial and residential real estate, wills and estate planning, corporate law, and litigation. She reports to the Managing Partner and oversees all administrative functions (human resources, technology, finance, and facilities) at her firm. She enjoys the variety of tasks that pop up every day and thrives on the challenges of keeping her firm running smoothly and successfully.

I asked Barbara what skills and characteristics she thinks are most important for the Director of Administration at her firm, and she said "being organized, flexible, open minded, and having the ability to manage change." Being a good listener is also critical for dealing with staff and the management. I asked her what's fun at work, and she said "the people." When I asked her what's her least favorite task, she said "the people" again, but only when she has to be her firm's disciplinarian.

Barbara enjoys travelling around the world during her "down" time. She has visited England, Barbados, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Australia, and Hawaii. Her favorite place here in the States is Joshua Tree National Park in southern California and Tucson, Arizona. She loves to hike, sew, and decorate cakes.

Barbara joined ALA in 1986. Over the years, she served her local Chapter as their Vice President and President. Because her chapter is small (40 members) and volunteers are scarce, her terms of office often exceeded a year. She attended her first ALA national conference in 1998. She skipped a few years, and then attended ALA's 2002 conference in San Antonio, and she hasn't missed one since.

In 2011, the then-serving Region 1 Director, Janine Book, encouraged Barbara to volunteer for the Regional Nominating Committee. After a bit of soul-searching, Barbara felt she could bring a Canadian viewpoint to our organization, so she volunteered and was appointed Region 1 Representative for two years. Her term ended this May. She has made many wonderful connections with both business partners and other ALA members over the years. She says the experience she's gained at the regional level has given her a stronger appreciation of the efforts of chapter volunteers that are required to make ALA so successful and valuable to its membership.

Barbara enjoyed working with the members of different ALA Regions, ALA's Board of Directors, and the Headquarters staff, and she's looking forward to serving on future ALA committees. She strongly encourages other ALA members to volunteer for regional committees. Consider volunteering, she urges—your chapter, your region, and ALA need YOU. Barbara said in a recent article, "Remember, in likeness to Neil Armstrong's famous quote, 'one small step for you is one giant leap for ALA'. Each one of us is a leader and has much to offer our association as a whole."

So, look for Barbara at the next conference, and she'll be happy to tell you more about her experiences while serving on the Region One Leadership Team.

Fran Puntillo, CLM, is the Office Manager of Weiner Lesniak, LLP in Parsippany.

A Bowl-A-Thon was held on February 21, 2015 at Eagle Rock Lanes in West Orange. A fantastic time was had by all 40 who attended, including members, family and business sponsors. Over $2,300 was collected for Interfaith Food Pantry.

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BY MARY ELLEN DOLAN AND LOUISE RUFFO

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